

NAVAL POSTGRADUATE SCHOOL

Monterey, California



THESIS

**WINDOWS IN THE CEILING...LEADERSHIP ADVICE
AND STRATEGIES FROM SUCCESSFUL FEMALE
EXECUTIVES**

by

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June 2001

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20011116 166

REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE			<i>Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188</i>	
Public reporting burden for this collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instruction, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington, VA 22202-4302, and to the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reduction Project (0704-0188) Washington DC 20503.				
1. AGENCY USE ONLY (Leave blank)		2. REPORT DATE June 2001	3. REPORT TYPE AND DATES COVERED Master's Thesis	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE: Windows in the Ceiling...Leadership Advice and strategies from Successful Female Executives			5. FUNDING NUMBERS	
6. AUTHOR(S) Colleen M. Setili				
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Naval Postgraduate School Monterey, CA 93943-5000			PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) N/A			10. SPONSORING / MONITORING AGENCY REPORT NUMBER	
11. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES The views expressed in this thesis are those of the author and do not reflect the official policy or position of the Department of Defense or the U.S. Government.				
12a. DISTRIBUTION / AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited			12b. DISTRIBUTION CODE	
13. ABSTRACT (maximum 200 words) This thesis provides a framework for understanding specific strategies and personal characteristics women can utilize to enable them to reach the top levels of an organization. In order to do so, current literature was reviewed that was written primarily from a female perspective, and civilian women in high-grade positions working for the Army were interviewed to obtain their own personal strategies, personal characteristics, and opinions regarding the glass-ceiling concept and how to achieve success. The goal is to help break down the invisible barriers to success (or glass-ceiling) and help women achieve the success they desire. In a world where powerful women are still comparatively rare, women's success stories are welcome.				
14. SUBJECT TERMS Leadership, Leadership Strategies, Personal Characteristics, Women in Leadership			15. NUMBER OF PAGES 104	
			16. PRICE CODE	
17. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF REPORT Unclassified	18. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF THIS PAGE Unclassified	19. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF ABSTRACT Unclassified	20. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT UL	

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**WINDOWS IN THE CEILING...LEADERSHIP ADVICE AND STRATEGIES
FROM SUCCESSFUL FEMALE EXECUTIVES**

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Submitted in partial fulfillment of the
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MASTER OF SCIENCE IN PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

from the

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ABSTRACT

This thesis provides a framework for understanding specific strategies and personal characteristics women can utilize to enable them to reach the top levels of an organization. In order to do so, current literature was reviewed that was written primarily from a female perspective, and civilian women in high-grade positions working for the Army were interviewed to obtain their own personal strategies, personal characteristics, and opinions regarding the glass-ceiling concept and how to achieve success. The goal is to help break down the invisible barriers to success (or glass-ceiling) and help women achieve the success they desire. In a world where powerful women are still comparatively rare, women's success stories are welcome.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author would like to acknowledge her office for their continuing support and understanding throughout the Naval Postgraduate School Distance Learning Program Management Masters Degree Program.

The author would like to thank the thirty women interviewed for this thesis for their time, shared wisdom, and insightful responses that are very much appreciated.

The author would like to thank her advisor, Dr. John Barrios-Choplin, for his guidance and patience during the thesis completion.

The author would like to thank her Distance Learning Program compatriots from Warren, Michigan who made Distance Learning a fun, interesting, and enjoyable experience. The author treasures the friendships made.

On a personal note, the author would like to thank her children Jaclyn, Christopher, and Alexa for their continuing love and support no matter what their mother endeavors.

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I. INTRODUCTION

A. BACKGROUND

The study of successful women's leadership strategies and personal characteristics is extremely important in today's working environment. Because of the gains made in education, women have achieved virtual parity with men when entering the workforce regardless of career field. Per a recent Catalyst report (1998), women today fill 49% of all managerial and professional jobs, double that of two decades ago. Women earn 30% of all MBAs and 42% of all law degrees. Common sense would dictate that the same percentage of women should make it to the upper echelons of an organization, but this is not the case. Only 3% of the top executives are females per Catalyst (1998). Catalyst has also identified what they perceive as the most powerful barriers to female advancement. These barriers are as follows:

- Negative assumptions in executive ranks about women, their abilities, and their commitments to careers.
- Perceptions that women don't fit with the corporate culture.
- Lack of career planning and the range of job experiences commensurate with the future needs of the organization.
- Lack of core opportunities for female employees who have management potential.
- Assumption that women will not relocate for career advancement.
- Failure to make managers accountable for advancing women.

- Management reluctance to giving women line (that is, revenue-generating) experience.
- Absence of, or too limited, succession planning.
- “Negative mentoring” and self-selection where women move into staff areas instead of line positions.
- Lack of mentoring and exclusion from informal career networks, where men have typically learned the unwritten rules of success.
- Appraisal and compensation systems that are not uniform for men and women.
- Corporate systems designed prior to women’s large-scale infusion into the workplace, such as benefit systems and productivity measures that don’t take into account new policies such as flexible work arrangements.
- Other forms of “cultural discouragement”, like a work environment that values long hours over actual performance or that offers limited support for work-family initiatives and limited commitment to diversity programs in general.
- Discrimination and sexual harassment.

Figure 1 identifies in graph format female executive responses to the question “What holds women back from advancement (Catalyst, 1998).

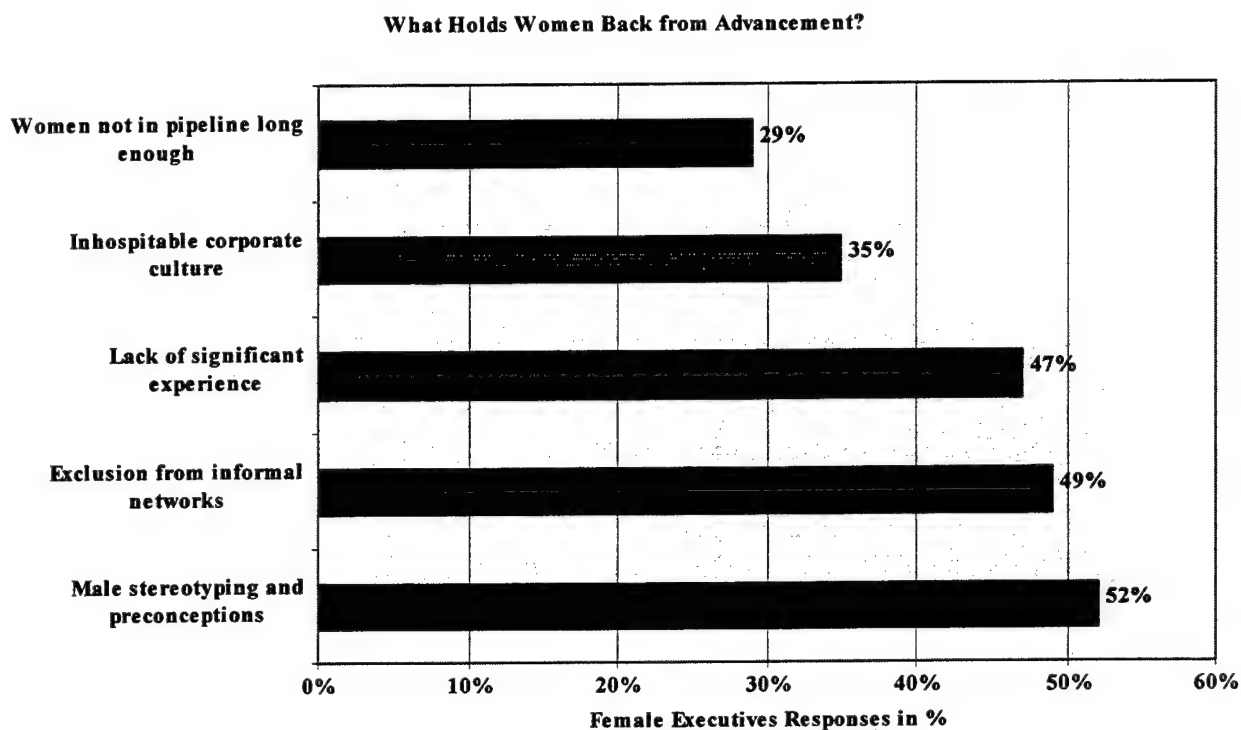


Figure 1. What holds Women Back from Advancement? (Catalyst, 1998)

In the civil service environment, according to a new report from the General Accounting Office, (GAO-01-377 SES Diversity) white men continue to dominate the highest levels, but, their numbers have declined in the 1990s while the number of women and minorities have continued to increase. Each of the 24 largest Federal agencies saw growth among women during the 1990's. The GAO found that the number of white male supervisors fell from 84% to 69% from 1990 to 1999. More than one-fifth of managers are now women. However, Rep. Elijah Cummings, D-MD states, “Women and minorities may be moving up the ladder of employment opportunity, but the fact of the

matter is they're moving at a snail's pace (quoted from Associated Press, GAO Reports on Women, Minorities, May 19, 2001)."

Obviously, the disparity between men and women in the top echelons of their respective organizations is decreasing and more women are becoming successful leaders. The intent and focus of this thesis is to examine the strategies and personal characteristics that the women at the top perceive as critical to their success.

B. PURPOSE

This thesis examines the specific strategies and personal characteristics women can utilize to enable them to reach the top levels of an organization. In the last ten years there has been a surge in the publication of articles and books on women in leadership. The leadership-gender issue has been a significant one as more and more women enter the workforce and become leaders. Many publications discuss traditional "trait" theories as well as ideas about the emerging leadership styles that work best in today's less structured and hierarchical types of organizations. Other publications attempt to answer if gender is a relevant factor in leadership (a hot topic of dissention) and what leadership qualities will be required in the next century. This paper will not examine leadership trait issues but instead will only examine what strategies and personal characteristics enabled women at the top levels to get there. This will be accomplished by reviewing current literature specifically from a women's perspective, and by interviewing civilian women in high-grade positions working for the Army to obtain their own personal strategies and advice. In a world where powerful women are still comparatively rare, women's success stories are especially welcome. Per O'Brien (1998) the concept of a glass ceiling, or an

invisible barrier preventing women from getting ahead in the workplace, did not exist 30 years ago as women were just beginning to enter the workplace. The concept evolved when more women started entering the workplace in the 1960's and 1970's. Now, however, women have far more opportunity to be in sync with their individual organizations. The societal culture has evolved and women are far more educated and well positioned than they were thirty years ago. The major purpose of this thesis is to examine the strategies and personal characteristics that will help break down the invisible barriers to success (or glass ceiling) and help women achieve the success they desire.

C. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions provide the framework for this thesis:

1. Primary

What leadership strategies and personal characteristics are considered critical in enabling women to reach the upper levels of their organization?

2. Secondary

Do successful civilian women leaders in the Army believe a "glass-ceiling" still exists and what are their viewpoints on the topic?

What major leadership strategies have influenced the success of civilian women leaders in the Army?

What major personal characteristics do civilian women leaders in the Army believe are critical to their success and why?

What demographic or environmental factors have influenced the success of civilian women leaders in the Army?

What specific advice can we give women in management to enable them to achieve the success they desire in their careers?

D. SCOPE

This thesis will initially evaluate the current literature for successful leadership strategies and personal characteristics, primarily from a female author perspective. Although there is no single definition of leadership, there are common leadership strategies and characteristics that transcend setting and context. The current literature will also be evaluated to determine if demographic and environmental factors are influencers of a women's success. The focus will then be narrowed and critical leadership strategies and advice from higher-graded civilian Army females will be extracted. Ultimately, the author will offer recommendations and advice for women new in management to give them ideas that maximize their leadership potential.

E. METHODOLOGY

Current literature was reviewed and evaluated to determine successful leadership strategies and personal characteristics that applied to successful women executives. In the past, women who have sought leadership roles have had a harder time breaking through the barriers to upper management or have become overwhelmed when they have had to deal with these barriers. Per Gallagher (2000), the women who have succeeded have found that there are specific strategies that can be taken to either eliminate or negate the barriers to success. The so-called "glass-ceiling" that women have encountered in the past was real but not impenetrable. Gallagher stated that successful women leaders who

wanted to make it into the senior ranks found that critical success strategies and personal characteristics helped them do this.

A questionnaire was also developed in order to narrow the focus and concentrate on leadership strategies and personal characteristics of successful female civilians working for the Army. The questionnaire was modeled to include strategies and personal characteristics discussed in the current literature in order to determine if these would be universal in helping to determine success. Thirty women were interviewed from three separate Army commands. The interviews were conducted utilizing a combination of e-mail, phone interviews, and face-to-face interviews. The women interviewed were all considered to be leaders in the sense that they have all achieved high-grade (GS-14 and GS-15) positions. The interview questions also included sections relating to demographic and environmental influences and open-ended questions relating to the glass-ceiling concept and advice to give women newly in management. The survey questionnaire is Appendix A.

F. ORGANIZATION OF THESIS

Chapter II presents a literature review of successful leadership strategies, personal characteristics, and demographic and environmental factors. Chapter III describes the methodology used in conducting research. Chapter IV provides a quantitative listing and analysis of data collected from the interview questionnaire. Chapter V summarizes the conclusions of the study, provides comparisons found between data in the literature review and data collected from the questionnaire, and provides recommendations to

women new in management to follow in order to give them ideas to maximize their leadership potential. Finally, follow-on research is suggested.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. OVERVIEW

This chapter presents a literature review of critical leadership strategies, personal characteristics, and demographic and environmental factors shown to help women achieve success in their careers. The primary focus of this chapter is an examination of the viewpoints of successful women leaders who have already achieved their goals.

B. DEFINITION OF LEADERSHIP

There are many definitions of leadership. Dubrin (1998) lists several definitions of leadership that follow:

Leadership is interpersonal influence directed toward attaining goals and is achieved through communication...leadership is a way of influencing people beyond routine compliance with directions and orders...leadership is an act that causes others to act or respond in a shared direction...leadership is the key dynamic force that motivates and coordinates an organization to accomplish its objectives...leadership is the ability to inspire confidence and support among the people who are needed to attain organizational goals.

Barry Munitz, President and CEO, the J. Paul Getty Trust (quoted from website

<http://talentdevelop.com>) states:

There is no single definition of leadership...Even so; there are a few common elements that transcend style, setting, and context. Virtually all forms of leadership are inspirational and involve facilitating change. Strong executives require courage, a willingness to take risks, an ability to dream about alternatives while weighing their consequences, and the capacity to engage colleagues from different perspectives toward common goals. Overall, this final ability to learn quickly and bravely from one's mistakes may be the most crucial characteristic...an ironic perspective and a healthy sense of humor to not hurt.

Leaders defined for this thesis consist of those women in the upper echelons of their organizations who are recognized as change agents, influencing others towards the attainment of defined organizational or group goals.

The leadership strategies, personal characteristics, and demographic and environmental factors discussed in the literature review pertain to women who are CEO's for Fortune 500 companies as well as to women who are managers and directors at middle management levels.

C. LITERATURE REVIEW OF CRITICAL LEADERSHIP STRATEGIES

A critical leadership strategy is defined as a particular action that will propel an employee up the corporate ladder. Critical leadership strategies can help answer the following questions: What does it take to reach the upper levels of my company and do I have the necessary skills and requirements to measure up? What are the qualities I need to cultivate my move up? What do I focus on? Women in leadership positions or those seeking leadership positions must acquire and utilize these strategies in order to move ahead in the workplace.

1. A Vision to Succeed

The first and foremost strategy per Gallagher (2000) is reframing thoughts and repositioning energies toward identifying and creating pathways to the top, rather than focusing on obstacles. In order to do this, a woman should first analyze and understand what she wants in a career, and what capabilities (strengths and weaknesses) she has to offer. This also involves learning about their companies, including the unwritten rules

about what it takes to get where she wants to go, and emulating successful role models. Gallagher (2000) states that women have a tendency towards erecting a psychological glass ceiling within their minds that deter their will and ability to succeed. Instead of worrying about psychological roadblocks such as “Will my husband and friends be jealous of me?” or “Will my children be abandoned?” it is much more productive to realize that it is possible for a women to pursue and achieve two major goals simultaneously – raising a family and having a meaningful career. Women often avoid prestigious jobs for fear of the stress and long hours. But, rising in an organizational hierarchy often provides more freedom and flexibility to arrange schedules and more financial power to buy relief from domestic chores. Also, if you work, you might as well work in the most productive and cleverest way possible. Per Austin (2000), the process of achievement makes you a different person...more capable, confident, and resourceful. Gilberd (2000) states that it is necessary to believe in you and believe in possibilities. Successful women have learned to avoid or remove negative beliefs that hold them back such as thinking you are too young or too old. You are in charge of your destiny and need to have a vision of what you want and how to get there.

2. Job Fit

Per Abrams (2000), it is necessary to be passionate about your job – when you care deeply about something your excitement will become palpable and will lead others to want to share it. Finding the correct job fit however will take trial and error. Every job involves trade-offs and every person’s job fit is different. It is important to recognize however that there is no “perfect” job and that everyone has to start somewhere and pay their dues. It is important to let people know what you want so you have others to help

you achieve your objectives. You also need to recognize when it is time to leave and move on even if the job is comfortable and familiar. The time to move on is right when the job becomes routine and you are not learning anything anymore or there is no excitement when you get out of bed in the morning. It is also time to leave when you have reached a plateau in your organization and you don't want to be there.

Gilberd (1996) interviewed over 125 highly successful women from all kinds of business settings in order to learn about the strategies that contributed to their success. She states that it is necessary to create your own definition of success by finding your passion so you can love your work. This means continually asking the right questions of yourself to determine your priorities, values, and determining if your job is meeting your own definition of fit and success. Gallagher (2000) quotes Liz Fetter, President of North Point Communications, who articulates the requirement to search for job fit by saying:

If you don't like your job, either start liking it or change. If you don't think you have enough education, go get that education. If you don't think you're doing something interesting, go do something else. Once you realize this is it, and you have control over your life and the choices you make-and know that everybody has unexpected stuff happen to them-then the way is clear. It's not the situation but what you do with the situation and with the hand that you're dealt that really determines your ultimate success and happiness.

3. Goal Setting and Planning

Another important strategy per Abrams (2000) is goal setting and planning.

Women do not always take an honest look at their careers and chart a course, which is why job #1 should be a self-assessment detailing what the job entails, if the job is really what you want, what your capabilities are (strengths vs. weaknesses), and if you are aiming high enough. Goals are tools that help facilitate success and maintain focus.

Goals should not be constraints that cause additional stress but instead should help a woman concentrate on doing the best job and moving ahead. Everyone should try to have a short and long term plan for managing their careers. This plan should be reasonable and timely, and help project what actions will be necessary to get where you want to go. It might not be feasible to assume that all goals are possible to achieve at the same time, such as having children and becoming CEO for example, so it is also necessary to balance goal focus with flexibility.

Gilberd (1996) states that it is definitely necessary to take responsibility for your own career. This can be accomplished by adopting an entrepreneurial attitude and taking responsibility for change, articulating what skills you have to offer and describing what type of job you want that matches up to these skills, evaluating work choices in the long-term instead of just focusing on short-term choices, being willing to transition and make changes, creating your own solutions by reviewing a checklist of what you want in a career, and by keeping the big picture in mind. Gilberd also states that is necessary to take the vision of where you want to go and break it down into manageable objectives and goals. This involves analyzing the external environment, appraising the company's resources and capabilities, identifying market opportunities and niches, and then developing and prioritizing realistic strategic options.

4. Life-Long Learner

Per Abrams (2000), another important strategy is to become a life-long learner. There are three primary techniques that will help in gaining knowledge: using education and on-the-job training to build a knowledge base, being a student of the world, and

seeking and using feedback constructively. The last technique appears to be particularly difficult for women, as, per Abrams, they often take constructive criticism as a personal affront and get their feelings hurt. Instead, they should accept it, digest it, and move on. It is also important to consider getting a graduate degree. Although this is not imperative for success, it will open additional doors when the time is right to move on to a new organization or company. Common sense dictates that it is hard to reach great heights without a strong foundation. Gallagher (2000) states that although academic credentials are a must, a credential is not the only thing that is sufficient. Advancing into the executive levels requires the integration of both experience and education. Many of the executive women Gallagher interviewed did a good deal of on-the-job learning as they widened their areas of expertise.

5. Communication Skills and Visibility

Also important to obtaining and becoming a successful leader is learning how to access your communication skills and learning to present yourself and your ideas well. The components of successful communication include listening and gathering information, conveying your message, and presenting yourself and your work through sales and the arts of persuasion and self-promotion. Per Abrams (2000), women tend to communicate differently than men, and in a business world still dominated by men the female approach is often less effective. Women are socialized to “fit in” and men are socialized to stand out. Now carry these tendencies to the conference rooms or boardrooms. Women tend not to make strong statements. To communicate more effectively, Abrams states that it is important to do the following: never apologize, to shake hands firmly, to speak confidently with strong intonation, to make statements

rather than asking questions, and to make your presence felt and your voice heard.

Abrams also recommends having a sense of humor, and making sure there are no surprises between what you communicate and the actions that you take.

Tied in to the important concept of communication is that of visibility. Abrams states that no matter how good you are, if nobody knows it your professional development and effectiveness will be stymied. Besides being visible, personal presence and presentation (voice, posture, appearance, and comportment) are all very important. Because this is the area where you convey to others your capabilities and experience, it is important to self-promote yourself gracefully. Socialization tends to teach little girls to shrink from the spotlight and blend in with others. Contrarily, people need to see what you do to recognize it. Reality is reality and perception is reality. The squeaky wheel does tend to get the grease. Visibility will pay off with better jobs, promotions, and compensations.

6. Networking/Alliancing

Networking is also a critical leadership strategy. Networking simply means building a series of smaller relationships. Per Abrams (2000), networking helps you gather information and build expertise. It is important to understand the key decision-making people and processes throughout your organization. There are two types of people to cultivate: those you like and those who will help you get ahead. A simple way to network is to join both internal and external organizations and work to be visible within them. Once you have built a relationship with someone, it is also important to maintain it. And most importantly, don't burn bridges when you leave.

Gallagher (2000) states that, contrary to popular belief, networking is not a requirement for success. The senior women Gallagher interviewed believed networking to be an ineffective route to advancement and a time-consuming waste of energy because the relationships formed were either too shallow to be meaningful or the people who they connected with were too far from the critical promotion path to help. Instead, many of the senior women believed that building alliances or substantive relationships with fewer people by collaborating on tasks and projects was much more conducive for career success. Alliances are professional relationships that are substantive but not overly intimate and personal. Gallagher (2000) adds that "substantive relationships and alliances based on trust and shared tasks and projects are the key to building authentic connections and furthering career advancement."

7. Taking Risks

Abrams (2000) states that taking risks will help you achieve success in your organization. There are two types of risks. The first type is calculated risks, which consists of strategies such as doing your homework, preventing caution from getting in the way of good decisions, and having a flexible plan in place. The second type of risk is personal risk. This involves specific career path risks (such as new jobs and/or organizations), and standing up for your principles. The key is to see opportunity where others see risks, especially in turbulent or rapid growth organizations. It is important to push yourself beyond your comfort zone and learn to work past the anxiety that accompanies risk. Of course, not all risks are equal, so the risks should be analyzed and the consequences considered. It is also important to build in contingency plans by

preparing for a wide range of possible outcomes and being flexible. Recognize that as a career strategy, it is better to try and fail than to never have tried at all.

Gallagher (2000) states that risk-taking is a fact of life in upper-echelon jobs where decisions involving large sums of money and many people are made daily. Success depends on the ability to take significant risks that go beyond your comfort zone.

8. Support System

Abrams (2000) stresses the importance of having the right support system in place in order to maximize focus and flexibility. A support system is defined as your family, friends, nanny, or anyone else who can help you and support you in achieving your goals.

9. Summary of Leadership Strategies

Executive women interviewed for the book "Breaking the Glass Ceiling" (Morrison, 1987) gave leadership strategy advice that fell into five major categories and summarized the major points made in the literature review.

Morrison states that the first major category is to "be able". This translates into being competent, learning the job, knowing the people involved, and knowing all the basic skills necessary to help you compete against everyone else at the same level.

The second category is to be "be seen as able". It is important to take charge of your own public relations campaign so that your contributions to the company are visible and rewarded.

The third category is to "help others help you." This means finding a mentor to help you and networking to build relationships. It also translates into not being afraid to

ask for advice or to ask for feedback about performance style, and other's perceptions of you. Once the feedback is given it needs to be assimilated and acted upon.

The fourth category is "prepare to be lucky". This translates into several different factors – that of being flexible and open to all new opportunities and pushing your experience as far and wide as possible to take advantage of all options such as lateral moves. The executive women also advise going on all appropriate job interviews even if you don't want the job in order to increase opportunity and visibility. The last category is "know what you want". It is necessary to know what you want out of life as well as learning to balance, prioritize, sacrifice, and relax.

Morrison (1987) also discusses key lessons that represent key developmental leaps for all the executives that were interviewed. The six lessons for success consisted of:

- Learning the ropes, rules, and culture of your organization.
- Realizing that it was up to them to take control of their careers.
- Building confidence by taking on new jobs or responsibilities and performing well doing them.
- Relying on others to help (mentoring and networking).
- Embracing the ability to take charge and do what is best for the business.
- Integrating life and work.

D. LITERATURE REVIEW OF PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

The literature of personal characteristics is diverse and varied. In the 1920's and 1930's, leadership research focused on "trait theory" (website <http://ollie.dcccd.edu>) to

try to identify the traits or personal characteristics that differentiated leaders. Trait theory assumes that certain physical, social, and personal characteristics are inherent in leaders. This theory however could not definitely identify a set of traits that would consistently distinguish leaders from followers. Later research focused on how the leader or potential leader actually behaved (<http://ollie.dcccd.edu>). This research evolved into behavioral theories. Current literature links the major theories together by integrating requisite traits with certain actions. Having the appropriate traits makes it more likely that such actions will be taken and will be successful. The major findings on personal characteristics that influence the success of women leaders follow.

1. Persistence

Per Austin (2000) persistence is a trait that is utterly essential for woman's achievement: the capacity to persevere toward a goal despite the variety of forces that can throw one off course. Austin states that sexual discrimination is still taking place in the workplace although now it exists in another form...that of "deeds undone" or collaborations not offered, acknowledgements unvoiced, introductions not made, and opportunities withheld. Austin believes that the power pyramid increasingly squeezes women as they work their way up. As competition for fewer spots of authority increase, the personal and political challenges from male colleagues intensify. Women need to transfer emotionality into productive energy especially at times of major failure. Such moments are time to work at optimizing capacity for enlightened resilience as opposed to retreat or directionless rebound. It is important to regroup, reassess, and rebound.

2. Confidence

It is extremely important to have confidence in yourself and your abilities.

Today's leaders typically were raised with high expectations, and those expectations translated into confidence and a drive to succeed (Austin, 2000). Confidence enables you to be yourself, trust your instincts, have the conviction to hold firm to your principles, and communicate with assurance your views and hypotheses. Abrams also says: never accept no for an answer, and don't let obstacles derail you. It is important to believe in yourself and believe in your own ability to succeed.

3. Integrity

Abrams (2000) stresses how important it is to act with integrity. When all is said and done, the only thing that you really have is your own personal ethics. If people don't trust you, nothing else really matters. Business is transacted on relationships, which in turn are based on respect and trust. Integrity also influences how people view your reputation. Abrams (2000) states to take your reputation seriously, and seek to be known for your confidence, likable personality, and integrity. A reputation for these qualities will ensure that people will want to work with and for you.

4. Competence, Outcomes, Relationships, Endurance (CORE)

Gallagher (2000) has found through her studies that adherence to four critical success factors (called CORE) consistently emerged as imperative for advancement. Many of the women Gallagher interviewed stated that they would not have gone very far if they had not developed and nurtured these qualities

Competence is the sum total of experience, skills, and talents. Competence includes understanding how and by whom to get things done, as well as the ability to take a broad view. Competence includes the traits of intelligence, ability, and expertise. Competence also includes the ability to scale an idea, or the need to get a fundamental grasp of what works and what doesn't based on competing demands, trends, and situations.

Outcomes consist of the ability to be a high performer who can be counted on to achieve the company goals time and time again. This entails understanding which outcomes are important to the company and what it takes to deliver them without injuring other work relationships.

The quality of professional relationships also helps propel a woman forward, as a good working relationship is the hallmark of a successful manager (Abrams, 2000). The more connected and visible a woman is, the higher her opportunity to be selected for unique opportunities.

Endurance is also critical to success. This personal characteristic is necessary to sustain the momentum over the long haul and includes physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual endurance.

5. "Leading from Within" Top Four Characteristics

Huber (1998) lists four characteristics of leaders that she believes to be foundational to success. These characteristics are not traits or attributes, but instead are behavior choices that a person makes. The first is passion. Huber states that to be an effective leader, you must care and be committed to the job at hand. The second is

authenticity, or the desire to be who you are all the time. This means admitting all shortcomings, recognizing all strengths, and living as you are. The third is credibility, or following words with action and following through. Per Huber (1998), credibility begins with being authentic and is manifested in the actions you promise and deliver. The last is ethics. Ethical leaders have a high regard for human worth and make decisions according to this value system. Huber states that being ethical is a choice you make when passion, authenticity, and credibility are aligned with a belief system that is grounded in service to the community.

6. The Four P's

Brooks (1999) states that every success strategy has four essential components which she terms the "Four P's" for performance, perseverance, practice, and patience.

Performance, per Brooks, must be outstanding and topnotch. Many of the women Brooks interviewed for her book said that they didn't want anyone to doubt that they were well selected for their position and that they were doing a great job.

Perseverance involves a commitment to a goal and not losing sight of that goal despite challenges and setbacks. A major aspect of perseverance is also setting the goals to strive for.

Practice involves utilizing other strategies for success such as risk-taking and increasing visibility on a more regular basis. Brooks adds that it is important to practice saying no more often to balance duties and to practice not saying, "I'm sorry".

Patience means waiting to achieve goals. Frequently women have to depend on outside factors to facilitate efforts to achieve.

7. Adapting to Change

Jennifer James (quoted at website <http://talentdevelop.com>) identifies eight leadership skills that are necessary to develop to understand and adapt to change, a necessity in today's working environment. The eight leadership skills are as follows: Perspective, or the ability to sort out the positive and negative characteristics of a situation and adapt.

- Pattern recognition, or the ability to look for connections and trends.
- Cultural knowledge, or the awareness and symbols of culture.
- Flexibility, or the ability to adapt to change.
- Vision in order to see the foundation of how we live and work.
- Energy, or the ability to feel alive through trust, communication, continuous learning, and the power of knowledge.
- Intelligence, or the ability to integrate creativity and logic.
- Global values, or understanding the value systems of all races and cultures.

8. Continually Displaying "Leadership" Qualities

Gallagher (2000) states that the women executives with whom she interviewed had many opinions on how to become a leader and what qualities would be most advantageous. These included creating a successful track record, driving execution (getting the job done), and making sure that the train leaves the station on time. It is important to build production teamwork and alliances, and develop strong interpersonal skills. You need to know how to communicate and deal with people.

9. Common Characteristics

Gallagher (2000) found that people (not just women) who move up into the senior level portray many of the same characteristics. They are thoughtful, concise in what they say, straightforward, and direct instead of being scattered and not focused. Other important personal characteristics are reliability, persistence, focus, visibility, credibility, integrity, interpersonal skills, endurance, the ability to balance all aspects of your life, decisive, confident, resiliency, accountability, curiously, a high appetite for learning, and a good sense of humor.

Morrison (1987) lists several personal characteristics (also can be thought of to some extent as strategies) that repeatedly came up during various interviews with successful executives. The top six characteristics are a track record of achievements, getting help, desire and will to succeed, ability to manage people and maintain interpersonal relationships, willingness to take risks, and ability to be tough, decisive, and demanding. Other top characteristics that repeatedly were mentioned in interviews are being smart and analytical, impressive image, confidence, ability to work with others, adapting, and being easy to be with.

10. Summary of Personal Characteristics

The major personal characteristics appearing in the literature relate to being persistent and patient about defining and implementing goals, acting with integrity, being confident in yourself and your abilities, developing relationships and alliances, and thoughtful, direct, and concise when communicating. These personal characteristics are straightforward, make common sense, and can be developed by a woman for the purpose of moving ahead in a chosen career.

E. LITERATURE REVIEW OF DEMOGRAPHIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

The study of the demographic and environmental influences of successful women in leadership positions can yield important advice from which to draw from. In "See Jane Win" (Rimm, 1999) the author examined the early childhood and environmental influences of 1,236 women who have achieved successful and fulfilling careers. This was accomplished through an extensive written and personal interview process. The purpose of the interview was to gain an understanding of the motivating factors in the lives of successful career women so that parents and educators could apply the factors that worked. These women were asked to participate only if they had balanced and fulfilling family lives as well. The author wanted to know what real life ingredients worked to influence women to achieve interesting careers with fulfilling personal lives. The analysis of these women yielded a number of common important demographic and environmental influences that the author considers to be significant. The major demographic and environmental factors follow.

1. Education

The most significant demographic and environmental factor is the expectation to achieve a high educational level (Rimm, 1999). Parents of the women in the study expected them to complete college and expected them to have careers. Most women had both parents setting high expectations although not to an unrealistic level where the pressure became unbearable. The majority of the women in the survey were also highly intelligent according to different measures and spent a considerable amount of time

developing good study habits. They were motivated to achieve at an early age. Their parents were coaches and not judges, and this appeared to be the most effective way to set high but realistic expectations for their daughters.

The majority of the women in the survey (Rimm, 1999) were educated at public schools although twice as many successful women attended private schools as compared to children in the overall population. It appears that if the women were doing well in public schools it was okay to keep them there. If not, it was more advantageous to switch over to a private school. It was important to search for schools with dedicated and competent teachers.

There were many bookworms among the women in the study in every career category. The successful women loved to read, and this was highly encouraged by parents and teachers. The successful women also were interested in science and math, especially those in the scientific professions. In fact, every subject was encouraged, including history and social studies. The women who were always truly interested in learning had a better chance at success when they grew up.

2. Extracurricular Activities

Also motivating at an early age was the importance of being involved in extracurricular activities (Rimm, 1999). The favorite childhood activity was reading, but this was closely followed by music, involvement in Girl Scouts, athletics, and student government. Busy and successful career women were also busy and interesting little girls who lived a balanced life. Half of the women said that they also spent a lot of time alone, but did not watch a lot of television. Involvement in extracurricular activities helped the

women learn to handle complexity, and also develop organizational and planning skills. The quiet time helped them to learn how to entertain themselves and to think creatively.

3. Positive Experiences

The women in the study (Rimm, 1999) listed a number of positive experiences that they believe helped them to be successful later in life. The main positive experience was "winning in competition" because this was extremely motivating to them. It was important for the women to learn how to win and how to lose. According to Rimm (1999), winning builds confidence and losing builds character. Both were important to eventual career success. The second most frequently chosen positive experience was family and individual travel. Travel was viewed as both enriching and adventurous and helped to build self-confidence. It was also a valuable learning experience.

Most of the women in the study were firstborns, although this does not appear to be a major success factor. A major success factor was the importance of making sure that all daughters received leadership opportunities and responsibilities regardless of birth order. For example, it is important not to baby the youngest daughter, nor label the children "the smart one" or "the athlete".

4. Strong Identification

A separate study (Astin & Leland, 1991) compared early demographic and environmental factors of seventy-seven women in visible leadership roles in educational institutions, Government agencies, and other educational and professional organizations. A major finding of this study was how important roots were in developing values and

leadership potential even though individual family backgrounds were very eclectic and varied. The majority of the survey respondents note strong identification with very strong and self-actualized people in their lives, predominantly their mothers, but fathers were close seconds. According to the authors, the interviews strongly suggested, "family circumstances and philosophies converged in positive ways to shape individual talents or provide special experiences that would later support these women in professional roles." The concept of "to do" was crucial in shaping future women leaders. The parents in this study also set high educational and career expectations and were clear what these expectations entailed. Many parents stressed to their daughters that they could be or do anything they wanted. When support and parental expectations came from both parents, the impact was greatest on the daughter.

5. Summary of Demographic and Environmental Factors

In summary, high career and educational expectations, specifically from both parents, was the greatest motivator propelling a young woman to succeed later in life according to the literature. Also important were life-enriching experiences such as travel and extracurricular activities. Demographics such as birth order or early educational experiences (such as private versus public schools) did not appear to influence success as much as internal and external motivation to succeed.

F. SUMMARY OF LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature is rich with practical strategies and personal characteristics to emulate. Most of the strategies and personal characteristics come from the philosophies

and attitudes of successful women in industry. Of course, the advice is derived from common sense and is applicable to other aspects of a balanced life. This section can be summarized by quoting Angi Ma Wong's "Golden Rules for a Successful Life" (Gilbert, 1996, page 248) as follows:

1. Life is not a dress rehearsal; so don't waste it on worry, guilt, or regrets. Every day is a gift, so make it count.
2. Know and be true to yourself and what you love, care, and feel passionate about. It is important to know your own strengths and overcome your weaknesses. You are what you think you are. Visualize in your mind what you want to be, and, yes, you can do or be anything you choose.
3. The world is full of good people who are able and willing to help you if you would only ask them. "To know the road ahead, ask those coming back."-Chinese proverb
4. Listen and learn, learn, learn from everyone around you. Others have valuable information for you if you let them teach you.
5. Be willing to work harder than you've ever worked before, but stay focused on your goals and dreams. Success is getting what you want; happiness is wanting what you get.
6. Don't let anyone else define success for you. Surround yourself with happy people even though they may not be as knowledgeable. You can always train someone, but you cannot buy loyalty or a positive attitude. These attributes will contribute much to your environment.
7. Be humble. Everyone in the world knows at least one thing more about something than you do.
8. Share what you do best and be generous with your passion, expertise, and enthusiasm. Like planting seeds, you never know what great things may come from something you said or did. Whose life will you change today because you were kind, generous, sharing, compassionate, or a good listener?

9. Start each day joyfully and with a heart of thanks to whichever power you believe in for all the blessings that you have that day: family, friends, shelter, food, clothing. Forget about comparisons with others. There will always be those who have more than you.
10. Be good and kind to yourself. Instead of beating yourself up over your mistakes, learn from them, move on, and don't look back. See problems and setbacks as challenges that build character and make you a stronger person.
11. Step back and see the big picture. It will help to keep things in perspective. What difference will this make in a week, a month, a year, or five years from now?
12. It is essential to your health and prosperity that you make time to nourish your mind, body, and soul daily. Maintaining balance in your life and recharging your inner self are critical for being effective in all that you do.
13. When you are feeling bad, do something for somebody else or give something away. This simple activity will help you realize there is always someone less fortunate than you whom you can help. It shifts the focus away from you.
14. Decide what you value and want most in life and what you are willing to sacrifice to attain or achieve it. The time may not be right for that job, man, child, or promotion, but its time and yours will come. I tell people that God never closes a door without opening a window, and I have found that the view from the window is almost always much wider and better.
15. Enjoy and savor your successes, great and small. You deserve them.

The next chapter (Methodology) provides an overview of the interview and questionnaire protocol and the study variables utilized to provide a framework for understanding specific strategies and personal characteristics women can utilize to enable them to reach the top levels of an organization.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. OVERVIEW

This chapter provides an explanation of the interview and questionnaire protocol designed specifically for this study and of the study variables utilized.

The intent of this thesis is to provide a framework for understanding specific strategies and personal characteristics women can utilize to enable them to reach the top levels of an organization. In order to do so, current literature was reviewed that was written primarily from a female perspective, and civilian women in high-grade positions working for the Army were interviewed to obtain their own personal strategies, personal characteristics, and opinions regarding the glass-ceiling concept and how to achieve success. The goal is to help break down the invisible barriers to success (or glass ceiling) and help women achieve the success they desire.

The questionnaire is designed to provide answers to the following research questions:

1. Primary

What leadership strategies and personal characteristics are considered critical in enabling women to reach the upper levels of their organization?

2. Secondary

Do successful civilian women leaders in the Army believe a "glass-ceiling" still exists and what are their viewpoints on the topic?

What major leadership strategies have influenced the success of civilian women leaders in the Army?

What major personal characteristics do civilian women leaders in the Army believe are critical to their success and why?

What demographic or environmental factors have influenced the success of civilian women leaders in the Army?

What specific advice can we give women in management to enable them to achieve the success they desire in their careers?

B. QUESTIONNAIRE SCOPE

The survey sample was limited to civilian women working as high-grade executives (GS-14 and GS-15) for the Army. A total of forty requests for data were sent out in the third quarter of FY01 and respondents were given one month to reply.

Participation was strictly voluntary and confidential. At the end of the survey period thirty responses were received. The e-mailed or faxed questionnaires were followed through with phone calls and face-to-face interviews in ten cases to clarify responses. Many of the women interviewed were happy to discuss their individual strategies and barriers to success and also to define their own perceptions of what variables will help other women achieve the success they desire.

C. QUESTIONNAIRE VARIABLES

The questionnaire was designed to elicit responses from high-graded female civilians working for the Army regarding what strategies, personal characteristics, and demographic and environmental factors influenced their success. The interview questions were primarily yes or no but also open-ended in order to gather information

about the respondents thought, feelings, and perceptions relating to the thesis primary and secondary questions.

The questionnaire is divided into several parts depending on the type of question asked. The first part (A) is a demographic profile and requests the respondents name, position or title, grade, years in current position, age, marital status, number of children, and educational level. The purpose of this section is to determine if there are patterns within the demographic data that would help identify successful backgrounds.

Part B consists of questions relating to environmental and family influences. This section attempts to determine if family and environmental influences help to achieve eventual success. There are eleven questions in this section that relate to parents expectations, type of schooling, favorite subjects in school, extracurricular activities, travel, competitiveness, birth order, and the respondent's own interpretation of individual attributes.

Part C consists of questions relating to critical achievement strategies and personal characteristics. The questions in this section were derived from the literature discussed and were developed to gather information relating to the individual respondents strategies and personal characteristics contributing to success. The questions relating to strategy dealt specifically with strategic planning, mentoring, job fit, support systems, attitudes, networking, and perceptions of ability because of the preponderance of these strategies in the current literature. The questions relating to characteristics were more open-ended and were based on the perceptions of the individual respondent. All questions were designed to gather information about the respondent's individual thoughts, feelings, and perceptions concerning the subject matter.

Part D consists of questions relating to perceptions of women in leadership in general. The respondents were asked if they thought a glass ceiling still exists and why, if they thought women avoided prestigious jobs because of the long hours and stress that might occur, factors relevant to both success and holding women back, critical words of advice to give to women new in management, crucial career strategies for their own respective careers, and factors that influence women's success working for the Government as opposed to factors that influence a man's success in the Government. The questions in this section were primarily open-ended and provided the greatest opportunity for the women interviewed to provide advice relating to their own strategies and characteristics for success.

IV. DATA ANALYSIS

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents the results of a questionnaire administered to civilian women in high-graded positions working for the Army. The interview questionnaire was designed to elicit responses concerning strategies and personal characteristics relating to success. The questionnaire methodology is discussed in Chapter III. Thirty women in GS 14/15 positions from three separate Army commands were interviewed/surveyed for this thesis.

B. STRATEGIES

This section discusses the results of the questionnaire for questions relating to individual strategies for success. The question and response categories are as follows:

1. When in your career did you develop a strategic plan for success?

Seventeen of the respondents stated that they did develop a strategic plan for success. Eight respondents developed a strategic plan in the beginning of their careers, and nine respondents developed a plan in the middle of their careers. Thirteen of the respondents stated that they did not develop a strategic plan. For the most part, the women who said they did not develop a strategic plan stated that they did however look for opportunities and consistently performed well. Following are several quotes from the respondents answers to this question:

"I always had plans at each level in my career to be good at my current job...I did not have a plan to move to the next level until about three years ago...when I concluded that people who were not much smarter than me were getting ahead, so, why not me?"

"...not sure it was a strategic plan as much as looking for opportunities."

"Starting in 1976 when I was divorced and single mom of two small children."

"I am sorry to say I did not. My success was more attributable to good timing."

"Never consciously – success resulted from drive for self-realization and to be the best."

"From the first day..."

2. Do you work extra hours at your job?

The thirty respondents answered yes. All worked extra hours when required and/or necessary.

3. Did you have the help of a mentor or mentors?

Yes was answered by twenty-two of the respondents. Six respondents who answered yes stated however that mentorship was too strong of a term and most alliances consisted of having informal relationship with successful working peers with whom they had a lot in common. Following are several quotes from the responses:

"No, but I was encouraged by my management to seek higher grade levels."

"Mentors played a very important role in helping me become more knowledgeable in my career field."

"Yes, many in an unofficial capacity."

"Yes, but not formal mentors...just successful folks who I had a lot in common with – I admired them and learned from them."

"Yes, I did have the help of a couple of mentors – both of whom were formal supervisors. They were not formally assigned mentors, but they did fill that role. Both of them encouraged and challenged me to succeed. They discussed with me pressing issues to our organization to which we brainstormed various solutions."

"Yes, a mentor who did an exceptional job of exposing me to different experiences/people and giving me well rounded assignments."

"Yes, I was very lucky in my early career to become associated with a group of people who seemed to be fast tracking their way up the promotion path in contracting at that time. The group was made up of hard working, intelligent, ambitious people that were not afraid to work hard to achieve their goals."

"Mentors played a very important role in helping me become more knowledgeable in my career field."

4. Do you have the help of a good support system?

In response to this question, all thirty of the respondents stated yes and mentioned receiving strong support from husbands, family, and friends.

5. Do you network?

In response to this question, twenty-three of the respondents stated yes and seven stated no. Individual responses follow:

"Informally. I don't like structured networking events and I don't do well with them. But, I try to help others and consequently have developed quite a strong, extensive network. Keeping in touch with folks even after you don't work with them is a good thing."

"Yes – I make a point to stay in touch with people (especially women) that I've developed a professional rapport with. This is more challenging now ...because it means overcoming geographic and functional barriers."

"Yes, but not in a formal sense. I have colleagues in similar organizations in all three services and at DOD whom I can call on for help with various matters. These connections have provided invaluable help and insight on many occasions."

6. Do you think networking is an important strategy conducive to achieving success?

In response to this question, twenty-six of the respondents stated yes and four stated no. Several individual responses follow:

"Networking enables to know what types of opportunities are available and the problems that exist with a certain job/career opportunity."

"Yes, networking is a force multiplier. Networking can help sustain a career during its valleys."

"Yes, there is an old saying that it is not what you know, but who you know."

"Yes, it keeps you in touch with thoughts and activities of other successful people."

Yes – if you don't understand the "politics" of your organization and who the key players are, then in my opinion you limit your ability to move up the career chain. I think it takes more than just hard work – someone in a critical position in the organization needs to know you exist. In my opinion, many people think networking is "brown nosing" and I see them as entirely different."

"It can be extremely helpful. I am averse to name-dropping and believe that, in networking, there should be an underpinning of friendship or shared project or something. I don't like the meet and greet kind of networking."

"I think it is less important than it was advertised to be in the 80's. I think that many were left with the impression that networking in itself could lead to success. Solid technical background and initiative (including taking responsibility for your own career progress) are still essential. Networking helps ensure knowledge of opportunities and that others have knowledge of your interest and ability."

"It can be but you have to be able to produce as well. Networking can get you opportunities to show what you have."

"Not at all. I know too many people that are interested in networking to get ahead and they chitchat most of the day but networking doesn't mean anything without the smarts and other skills needed to actually do a job. The only time I would see networking as conducive is for a sales job."

"No, I think it often comes across as pushy and artificial. It is much better to know and become known through actual achievement."

"I think a person's reputation is important to achieving success. Getting your name and face known IS important, but, your reputation will follow you and can make or break you."

7. What career strategies do you feel are particularly crucial to advancing in your specific career field?

The respondents' answers to this open-ended question varied but did correspond with the strategy advice given in the literature review. Many stated that it was very important to take advantage of new learning opportunities in order to achieve a wide breadth of experience was essential. Education, training, developing interpersonal skills, being adaptive to change, networking, and finding a mentor to help were common responses. Selected individual responses follow:

“Being knowledgeable, a good communicator, decisive, able to exercise good judgment.”

“Strategic planners must look into the future and be hyper-sensitive to the winds of change.”

“Take leadership courses. Study how the Army works – politically, strategically, operationally, and tactically. Seek opportunities to learn from your subordinates and your peers. Market your organization and yourself constantly. Always display a positive, can-do attitude.”

“Hard work, visible projects, seek opportunities, and training.”

“Diversification is important. Working in different organizations helps you to gain an understanding of what each organizations focus is on.”

“Show excitement and enthusiasm, get involved in assignments that provide growth and challenge, don’t rest on prior accomplishments – always set out to prove yourself over and over, round out your portfolio in terms of on-the-job training, offsite training, mission-related accomplishments, special assignments, extra-curricular projects, examine the traits/style and background of those you have to deal with or need to influence, determine how to deal with others, and situations...always be ready with something significant to say, keep a file or list of discussion topics with key leaders when the situation arises, READ a variety of business related material.”

“Get a four year degree, attend program management school, and get at least dual Acquisition certified as soon as you can.”

“Visibility.”

“Take advantage of training programs, be willing to accept special projects – especially those with visibility. Be willing to stretch, don’t fear success or failure. Be willing to take lateral assignments in order to broaden your experience base. Seek advice and counsel from others.”

“Need to have the absolute best analytical abilities, to see through reams of data/events to pare down to the nitty-gritty of the problem that needs to be evaluated, the absolute best writing skills, common sense, and the ability to get the job done. Can’t be afraid to go against regulations and traditions that no longer make sense. Need to get the big picture outlook by experiencing jobs in many different offices...”

“Mobility, advanced leadership training.”

“Outside agency experience, overseas experience, private industry experience.”

“Surround yourself with smart people and learn how to energize them. Be ready for change, and be proactive for it.”

“Never say no.”

“Education. It is easy to say that a degree or MBA doesn’t give you any real job skills. That might even be true. But education will continue to be a discriminator for selections...”

“Preparation and training. Take advantage of every opportunity to grow and develop...and hopefully somewhere in the process you can find something you are passionately interested in.”

“I need to be able to play in the sandbox with all the men...”

“”Become well-rounded and take on challenges.”

“1. Education. Always strive to educate yourself for one or two positions beyond your current one, it that is your goal. Keep your technical skills at their peak in any case. 2. Multidisciplinary approach. Business, Cost Estimating, and Financial Management in DOD requires that a person have some knowledge of all the disciplines, so look for opportunities to learn about those areas...”

C. PERSONAL CHARACTERISTICS

This section discusses the questionnaire responses to questions concerning personal characteristics that are deemed necessary for success. Many of these questions were answered yes or no, with room to add individual responses and details. The questions and responses are as follows.

1. Please choose the top five personal characteristics you feel have contributed to your success. Characteristics on the questionnaire listed were humor, self-confidence, ambition, adaptability, creativity, physical appearance,

independence, risk-taking, interpersonal skills, self-discipline, perseverance, assertiveness, intelligence, compassion, commitment, initiative, sociability, and other.

The top five personal characteristics most conducive to success as rated by the respondents are Interpersonal Skills, Adaptability, Intelligence, Commitment, and Self-confidence. The frequency of responses to this question is stated in Figure 2, which follows.

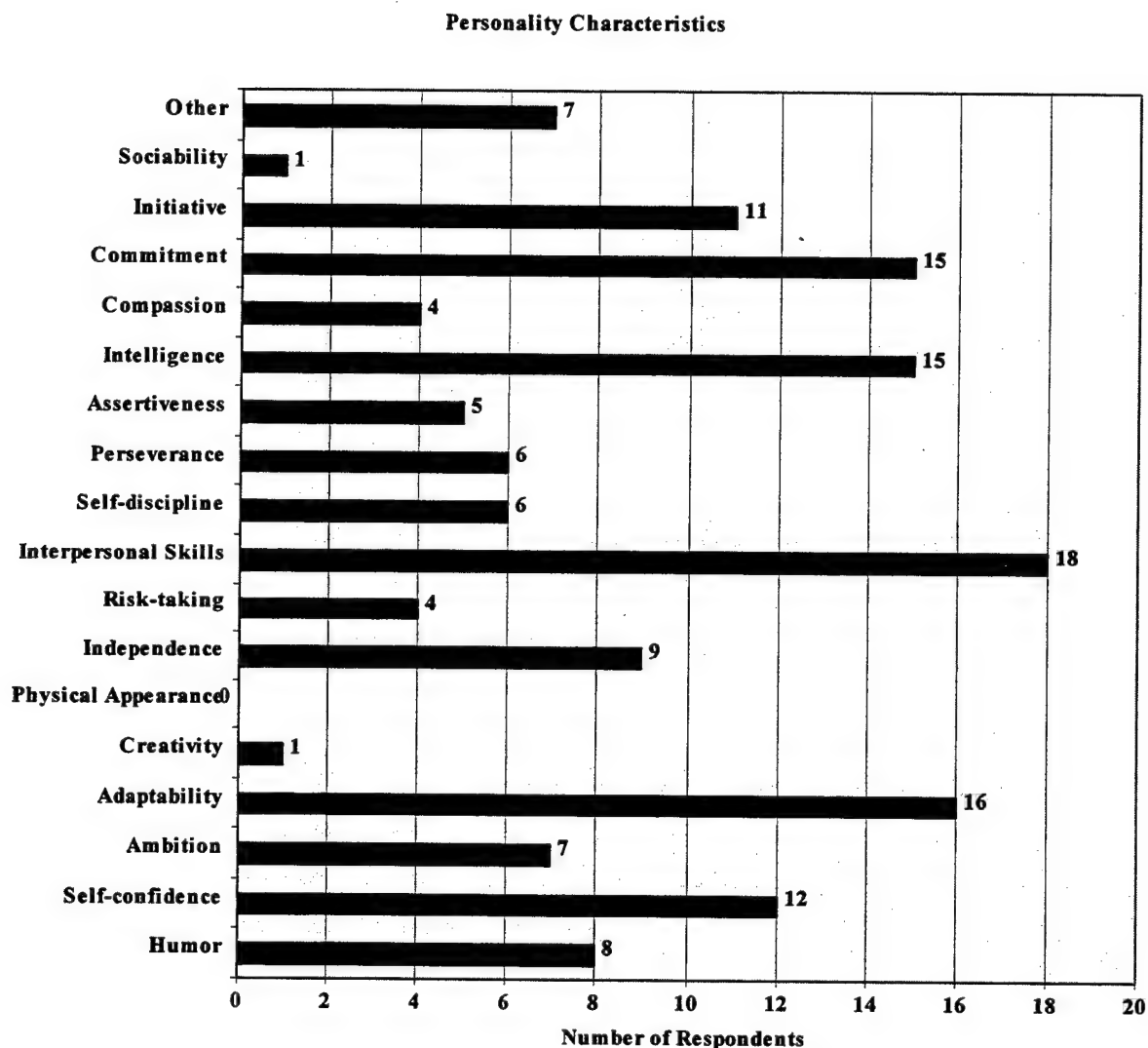


Figure 2. Frequency of Responses to Personal Characteristics (Source: Researcher)

2. Do you love your job?

Fourteen of the respondents stated that they did love their job, three said no, and thirteen stated that they liked their jobs but love was too strong of a word.

3. Do you feel that loving your job is a significant factor in achieving success?

Twenty-two of the respondents stated that yes, loving your job is a significant factor. Eight of the respondents said no. Individual comments are as follows:

"Not necessarily, but it would make it more fun...that's for sure."

"No, I think that knowing the right people and doing your best are significant factors in achieving success."

"No. However, I feel that commitment to your job is most important. Even if it is not the best job, you generally have the latitude to influence it – and most certainly, your attitude towards it. If you give it your all, you are certain to get a lot in return. I have learned something from every task I do...even those I dislike. I've learned to put things in perspective-for the present and the future."

"I think it helps – but I think it is also important to have the right skills and demonstrate a degree of competence."

"I believe that if you don't like your job, you will not have a successful career."

"Again, loving is the wrong word for me. However, liking my job and the drive to do the best I could are, in my opinion, the reasons for my career success. Additionally, I believe I am blessed with having a low boredom tolerance in the times we live in. I love change and a lot of it and I always like to look ahead because I can't succeed on where I have been."

"For short periods, I have had jobs for which I don't have much of an affinity. It is definitely more difficult in those jobs to maintain the momentum, especially in solving tough problems."

"Yes. I had one job, which I didn't love, and at which I was not very successful at all. Once I found a job that fit my talents and desires, I blossomed."

"Yes, because if you don't love it, you would give just the minimum effort."

4. How important do you think your attitude is in terms of achieving success?

All thirty respondents answered "important" or "very important" to this question.

Several individual responses follow:

"Absolutely critical. Having and exhibiting a positive attitude can make the difference when nothing else can."

"It is important. I do not think that people like to work with others that have an attitude problem. It can be nonproductive and can create unnecessary stress and tension in the work place. For these reasons I think management will be more inclined to promote someone with a positive attitude than a negative one."

"I believe attitude is paramount to success. I can't imagine promoting someone who has a negative attitude."

"Very important. We choose our attitudes and only we can control them. If it appears to others that I don't like my work or don't like those around me, it will alienate them."

"Very important. A person gets a reputation, especially if they have a bad attitude. It is not conducive to a successful team to have a member with an attitude problem, this could bring down a team."

"VERY important. I don't think I ever told anyone "not my job...I won't do it." Instead, my attitude has been: you pay me a lot of money – if that is what you want me to do, that's fine, as long as it is ethical, legal, and doesn't negatively impact my family life. I have been very open to new assignments and have learned A LOT with this attitude. I have seen others throw away opportunities with negative attitudes."

“Very – I have always seen things as possible and I think in terms of what’s possible to accomplish, both personally and in solving work problems. Without the vision of a successful outcome, it is difficult to achieve your goal.”

“I think it is very important. When I don’t feel or act confident about my success in an endeavor, I don’t end up successful in it.”

5. Was there a critical life event (e.g. death of a close family member or divorce) that occurred that helped propel you to achieve success?

Eleven of the respondents answered yes to this question, and nineteen respondents answered no. Of those that answered yes, most of the respondents answered that either a divorce or father’s death inspired a quest for greater independence. Many of the respondents stated that the drive to achieve success was more internal rather than related to an external event.

6. How important do you feel the perception of your ability is as contrasted to your actual working ability?

Twenty-nine of the respondents answered that perception is very important as contrasted to actual working ability. The one respondent who answered no stated:

“people will figure out pretty quickly if you don’t know something.” Selected responses to this question are as follows:

“I feel the perception of my ability is important. I think that people believe I have a greater knowledge of all aspects of my job than I truly do. In fact, perhaps my best ability is leadership and making the folks that work for me feel important – and relying on them. They are the experts and I am just fortunate to be surrounded by them and can gain from their knowledge.”

“I think it is important both to be perceived as able and to actually demonstrate that you are able.”

"I think both are critical. You may get thru the first gate on perception of ability, but actual working ability gives long term success."

"Critical and more so for a woman."

"Extremely important so you are not written off if people feel you are incompetent or hard to work with."

"They need to be the same thing. Perception without reality will be found out in time and you'll end up looking like a fool. Actual ability without perception of it means the person is doing something wrong in terms of interpersonal relationships."

"Perception (good or bad) has an effect on how people treat you and whether or not good assignment and career opportunities are given to you. I have seen recently where a manager has had a perception that could have killed an opportunity for a female."

"Perception is reality. People let go of perceptions only grudgingly. If one markets oneself well initially, one then generally has bought lots of time to actually gain the marketed level of expertise."

"Perceptions can make or break the best individual."

"I think how others perceive you is very important. If someone does not believe that you are credible or knowledgeable then they may ignore what you have to say regardless if it actually has merit."

7. Did you always have a sense of achievement concerning your career?

Twenty-three of the respondents stated that yes; they always had a sense of achievement concerning their careers. Seven of the respondents stated no. Individual responses are as follows:

"No, over the last couple of years I have felt under appreciated. During that same period, I was diligently seeking a promotion."

"No...I had one spell in my career when I was not successful and did not have any sense of achievement in my career. I was beginning to think all my brains had fallen out of my head. I could not do anything right

according to my supervisor. In fact, he threatened to demote me. Once I got out of that environment and found my niche, I blossomed once again. My knowledge and ideas were sought out by my supervisors, colleagues, and customers. I began to receive awards and bigger and bigger challenges. It made a huge difference in my outlook and my achievement.”

“Yes – it was an extension of academic competition to me, and I was able to maintain real forward progress for an extended period (10 years) before having any real setbacks.”

“Yes. Although many tasks have been frustrating, I always felt that I accomplished them – and accomplished them well.”

“Yes, I was very fortunate with my mentor and always received challenging work.”

“Yes, even when I was a public school teacher, teaching six preparations, sponsoring three extracurricular activities, and earning \$4320 per year for my trouble. I’ve always felt I was “doing good and doing well” which may be the definition of a sense of achievement.”

D. WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP PERCEPTIONS

The following section involves questions that relate to perceptions of women in leadership in general. The first two questions ask if the survey group believe that a glass ceiling still exists and their general perception or view of its nature. The next question asks the survey group if they believe that many women avoid prestigious jobs because of the long hours and stress that might occur. This question was asked to determine if the survey population thought women avoided leadership positions in general. The next two questions concern factors most relevant to achieving success in general and most relevant to holding women back. The answers to these open ended questions provide a summary of the success strategies and characteristics that the women thought were most beneficial to achieving career success as well as those that could negatively impact advancement.

The last questions concern critical advice to give women new in management working for the Army and factors that influence women's success in the Government that are different than those that influence men's success.

1. Do you think a glass ceiling still exists?

In response to this question, twenty-six of the survey population said yes and four said no. Individual comments follow:

"Yes, and glass walls."

"No question, it has been changing over time but is still a factor."

"To a point, yes. The command is trying to break it but we have not achieved it yet."

"Yes, based upon the number of women in the workforce, which I believe is higher overall than the number of men. The number of men in leadership roles is still substantially higher than the women in leadership roles."

"No, I have often heard women talk of the glass ceiling and I have to be perfectly honest with you that in almost 27 years in contracting I have never felt that I was inhibited in achieving my career goals."

2. What are your views on the glass-ceiling concept?

The responses to this question were all open-ended and varied. Selected responses follow:

"I believe that a glass ceiling exists, but for different reasons than the 70's and 80's, when women hadn't been in the workforce at level or types of jobs comparable to me. Now that women have proved that they can perform in these positions, I think the glass ceiling has new reasons for existence. One, women have made a choice to limit themselves because of other responsibilities they have, or cannot devote adequate time to investing themselves in a career to reach that higher level. Two, the

American workplace seems to have reached its limit on the numbers and types of accommodations it is willing to make for its worker, and this predominantly seems to impact women instead of men."

"I think that the glass-ceiling concept will continue to exist as long as men, who make up the majority of the leaders today, control who is promoted to leadership positions. I believe that some of the men have the perception that women cannot be good leaders."

"The ceiling exists but not everywhere...there are pockets where it has been shattered but it's not totally prevalent yet. I think the concept is two-fold. There is still the element but the majority (primarily white males) is still in charge; statistics support this statement when you look at the stratification of male/female CEO's, SES's, and other executives. I think men in general are slow accepting women's abilities and talents, however, there is still a good old boys network. I'm not faulting them because everyone tends to be drawn or want around them, people like themselves. The second element is that I believe many women are their own worst enemy. We are hardest on ourselves and tend to take support roles and acquiesce probably more than we should. It's not all our fault...how we were raised, how our parents were raised, our economic environment, our innate personality, and other factors have influenced our self views."

"We need to get women of all races in many management positions. There is still a good old boys network within the command. Some of the new leaders have just established their own good old boy network. There is not enough women or minorities to break the trend and break the glass ceiling."

"It is only human nature to want to perpetuate yourself. This is true of any category of people and leads to a manager developing successive generations of managers who are just like him – or her. It's an ego thing, "I'm wonderful, and so those just like me must be wonderful too." It takes enlightenment and a true sense of self to go counter to this natural tendency..."

"I think it's a matter of demographics, i.e. there are fewer women at the top simply because there are fewer women who qualify. This is attributable to many factors, such as, lack of mobility; careers interrupted during childbearing years, lower education levels etc. I also think that a higher percentage of women hold themselves back for a variety of reasons, e.g. fear of added responsibility, lack of desire to supervise others, no time for self-development, lack of support from their family etc."

"I think it is a reality, not because I have been faced with it and it is never a consideration in the way I operate my organization, I just have not really considered it seriously..."

"Understand and accept the fact that it exists. Do not let it deter you or ruin your goals or your life. Even if you have to take some side roads to get where you want to be, it should not, and in most cases, it will not stop you from getting there."

"...I don't believe as many women as men see the importance of high career achievement (to the expense of family, children, free time) because of how most of us grew up. I think the difficulty in getting a support structure that allows for the single-minded pursuit of a goal (for men, it is generally called a wife) does make achievement more difficult. But I also believe these things are choices, not constraints."

"It exists and is very unfair and demoralizing to the victim. A business that operates with a glass ceiling is a poorly managed business and cheats themselves of high quality female employees based on antiquated and prejudices perceptions."

"Women have to be better than men to get ahead. I think that we see more women in key positions, but they are held to a much higher standard than a man in the same position. For example, a man may be seen as "persistent, and sure of himself" while a woman is seen as "aggressive and a b_____."

"I've watched the ceiling move over the last twenty years, but it is still there. Twenty years ago it was difficult for a woman to get beyond the GS-12...now it is more a question of cracking through to the senior management ranks."

3. What is your opinion on the following statement..."Many women avoid prestigious jobs because of the long hours and stress that might occur."

The answers to this question were very individual and subjective. The majority of the women thought it was true in some cases, but not in all. This statement was modified to include men as well in many cases due to family priorities and commitments and other

factors. The responses all narrowed down to what women felt were priorities and how to structure and balance their lives. Selected individual responses follow:

"That could be a personal opinion and decision but should certainly not be generalized."

"What is actually happening is that many women do not buy into the MYTH that long hours and stress are an inevitable part of success. Success does not mean you have to join in the race to see who is the last to clock out every night. True success comes from a balanced life. I think we are moving to a realization of this, and when that happens, more women will be there."

"I believe women with young children may avoid such jobs. I have several employees in that role, and they all struggle with that problem. When I had small children, I struggled with it too."

"I think it is more accurately stated, 'some women avoid prestigious jobs because of the long hours and stress that might occur.' In my experience, women with children have more difficulty accepting the hours and stress associated with prestigious jobs – unless they have an excellent support system at home and great daycare."

"If you substitute people for women, that is probably a true statement. So it is also probably a true statement as it stands, just as 'Many men avoid prestigious jobs because of the long hours and stress that might occur' is probably true. It really doesn't matter until you get to the individual case of the individual person. If women are denied opportunities because it is assumed they want to avoid these things, then it is a problem. But most of us have ample opportunity to show we're not averse to long hours and stress."

"True to a point. I have seen this lately with men too especially in the Government sector. Some men have not taken promotion or career opportunities due to family commitments."

"To that I say, many men do also. I've heard this stated often. I feel that one of the reasons I've been able to accomplish as much as I have is that during most of my career I was single and without children so the perception was that I was able to travel and work extended hours if necessary."

"I don't think that statement is necessarily limited to women. Everyone has to make a personal decision whether they have what it takes and realizing that it might require letting other life decisions be changed by that decision."

4. What factors do you think are most relevant to achieving success in general?

Factors that the respondents thought were most relevant to achieving success were taking advantage of educational and learning opportunities, hard work and effort, learning how to interact with people effectively, perseverance, and an attitude to succeed.

Individual responses to this question follow:

"Giving every effort your best."

"The desire to advance."

"Hard work and timing."

"Developing an individual development plan to include training both formal and work related, finding good mentors...doing your best."

"Competence, timing, dealing with people effectively."

"A combination of skills, knowledge, and abilities..."

"Confidence, pride, willingness to take risks, willingness to grow, good social skills, and a good, healthy sense of humor."

"Having goals and working toward them. Getting the education and training. Looking for what needs to be done and doing it. Not being afraid to move outside your comfort zone."

"One needs to persevere, be intelligent, be politically savvy and astute, and definitely work very hard."

"Hard work and perseverance."

"Good opinion of yourself coupled with excellent skills."

"ATTITUDE, willingness to learn, and willingness to accept new missions – even if they aren't glamorous. These things get you visibility and show people you are ready, able, and willing to do what it takes."

"A formal education, an open mind, and a can-do attitude. I would rather promote a person who may not have the required expertise but is hard-working, resourceful, and willing to accept challenges than someone who sits and provides excuses for their poor performance."

"Attitude and perseverance."

"Liking what you do, feeling a sense of accomplishment in performing your duties, always looking forward and not backwards to the way it used to be, hard work, and having a reputation for honesty and fairness."

5. What factors do you think are most relevant to holding women back?

The responses to this question for the most part fell into two major categories, that of being forced to choose between family and career commitments (five responses) and the perception by men or society that women cannot hold high profile jobs and take care of a family at the same time (sixteen responses). Individual responses are as follow:

"If men can be a factor, then I think that men are the most significant factor holding women back."

"Having a supervisor that does not support your goals and objectives as I did. Also, not being assertive or aggressive enough to go after whatever you feel you deserve."

"Lack of self-esteem. Failure to set reasonable goals. Failure to plan towards those goals. Willingness to buy into the culture's view of themselves."

"Dependable, high quality child care, flexible hours, excessive requirements and expectations on their time that prevent them from putting in extra hours..."

"Reluctance to take control of their own destiny...also, socialization that teaches humility and modesty as positive attributes."

"I think the inherent differences between men and women is the most relevant factor. Men and women have been socialized differently, and therefore interact and communicate differently. This leads to the perception that women are less competent and confident than men, which is detrimental. The problem is that we can't fix it by acting like men, because this too is perceived negatively. It takes a fine balancing to come off as competent and confident, but still maintain the femininity that is expected"

"I don't think women are being held back. If women think they are being held back because they are women, then I would venture to say that in most cases there are other reasons relating to their personal skills and traits that they don't want to recognize as responsible for being held back. It is much easier to blame management for not getting ahead than to take a good look at oneself and recognize weaknesses and areas which need improving..."

"Many women need to stop acting like idiots. I still see far too much servile behavior, giggling, flirting. Women need to act more like serious adults."

"Education. Not having support from family. Not moving outside the comfort zone and expanding on knowledge and experience."

"The perception that females opinions and knowledge are not as worthwhile as those as men. The "old boys network". The preconceived notion that all women have family and daycare problems that prevent them from doing a job – without asking if that is the case for them."

"The perception that women with children cannot be relied upon. Prejudices and bias regarding promoting women into "male dominated" career fields i.e. engineering. Women are too emotional and cannot handle stress and pressure without breaking down. Women cannot be strong leaders, it goes against their nurturing traits."

"Male-oriented values in business, men's perception of women as subordinates and followers instead of capable leaders, women's avoidance of conflict and stress."

"Preconceived notions about the role of men and women often block effective communication. I don't know how many times in my career I've

made suggestions or provided a creative solution only to find it was attributed to a male in the discussion. This has gotten much better – less likely – over the years, but it's a marvel to watch..."

6. What critical piece of advice would you give a woman new in management working as a civilian for the Army?

Twenty-eight respondents answered this question. Each respondents advice follows:

"Live and work to your own standards. Let me quote something I read recently...to quote directly David Whyte (Crossing the Unknown Sea: Work as a Pilgrimage of Identity) *"I believe in the dignity and the preservation of personal honor. I believe in dignity; not in dignity's old shadow of puffery and self-importance, but in its power to keep us true to our own spirit. With dignity comes honor and an unwillingness to sell yourself short, to temporize or collude in a cowardly way that may preserve jobs but not honor. There are certain things we should not do, certain people we should not work for, lines we should not cross, conversations to which we should not descend, money we should earn however easily it may come, things we should not allow ourselves to be called in public."*

"Never say, "it's not my job", take every advantage of every learning experience, have a great attitude, learn to put things in perspective."

"Keep an open mind, be willing to change, and work hard. Always be true to yourself, do not try to be something you are not."

"Learn to delegate effectively. Get to know your people. Don't be afraid to take on challenging assignments."

"Team closely with counterparts in other areas to gain their support, establish a relationship with customers, get rid of deadwood as soon as possible, stay knowledgeable in your technical field. Be the expert or know where you can get the answers when you need to. Get a good support system so you can stay current with undercurrents in the organization."

"Know your stuff and care about people."

"Do your best at what you do, don't play games, take advantage of opportunities especially the ones you feel the most uncomfortable about...that is how you will grow."

"Take care of yourself (professionally, physically, and spiritually); no one else will."

"Take advantage of all the wonderful programs the Army has to offer. Especially when you are young and can prove your commitment and abilities."

"Be open to opportunities and make sure you give it your best effort. Plan to do a lot of lateral assignments before being promoted up the chain."

"The good old boy network is alive and well. Learn to work with it as best you can. Have patience and perseverance and keep your end state goal in mind. Be willing to move around within your organization and learn everything you can about said organization early on in your career. Do not homestead in any one organization and don't let anyone else do that to you. If you don't have it, get a college degree, a masters if you can. I still firmly believe that being a woman in management means you are going to have to work harder, faster, and be willing to give more of yourself to the organization than your male counterparts. It's not fair and/or right but its still a fact."

"Establish a relaxation/fitness routine that relieves stress – you'll need it, learn how to pick your battles and be willing to bend as part of a team, take on extra work if it helps the team effort, you'll be paid back in kind, coordinate office politics and management issues with your managerial peers-best to have agreement among yourselves, then you can present a united front to your joint upper management, be sensitive to the differences in needs between the people who work for you, for example, those who have children vs. those who don't, take care of your staff and your staff will take care of the mission."

"Establish a mentor, learn the soldier vocabulary, trust your own judgment, cultivate contacts, communicate a vision, grow your subordinates, and train your replacement."

"Don't ignore the political climate of where you work – learn to work within it."

"Do not make withdrawals until you have made some deposits."

"Be yourself and define your own style."

"Stay assertive, but do not assert your femininity too much. Try and be part of the team."

"I'd tell her to work hard, know her facts/subject, protect her employees and her boss, and definitely to express her views – especially if it is about something she is adamant."

"Don't be arrogant over having made it to a management position – be happy, but arrogance is a killer in my opinion and keeps you from truly making a difference. Work to understand your organization and what has to be done to make it successful, support your people because they are truly the path to success, be fair and honest and do the best you can. In the times we work in, always look forward, using the past as a stepping stone to future success but don't let your comfort zone with the past leave you behind."

"Don't hold back...seek out hi-viz opportunities to showcase your leadership/management talents."

"Learn as much as you can about everything that you can. Become an expert about as many things as you can. Maintain a sense of self. Respect others and command respect for yourself."

"Help other women in the workplace achieve what you have by mentoring them. There are not enough female mentors in the work place and while it is not a necessity to have a female mentor it may help women overcome obstacles that are in place as a result of a certain gender bias. Share your lessons learned, how you achieved your success, and provide suggestions on how they can become successful managers too."

"Take advantage of greening opportunities. Also, it is no different here than in private industry. In fact, it may be worse in that it is even more male-dominated. We've still got to fight to gain a leg up."

"Trust your instincts, be human, and give yourself a break. It will be at least six months until you know what you're doing in the job. That was true for any applicant, it isn't just you – so don't beat yourself up. Learn your job – ask questions if you have to."

"Just act the part. Refuse to buy into the intimidation culture. Understand the military mindset and know how to work within it."

"Maintain the characteristics that got you where you are, but be assertive and make sure to participate in meetings and discussions even when it is tough to be heard."

"Be excellent in your work, dignified in your demeanor, and demonstrate inner strength and character."

"Push your limits, broaden your scope of knowledge, do not allow yourself to be over spoken by more aggressive counterparts, and get comfortable with your minority status. Most importantly...remember (or learn) to have fun in your professional life."

7. What advice would you give women new in management concerning their future potential as leaders?

Twenty-nine respondents answered this question. Individual responses are as follows:

"Keep a positive upbeat attitude."

"Again, get a mentor. Keep an eye on what's going on in the command and Army. Know the latest info. Grow very thick skin. Be ready to discuss ideas. Never turn down an interview."

"You need to keep your eyes open for a training opportunity or a project that is a little above or outside your comfort zone, and then embrace it. It will be difficult, but you will learn how to lead and to follow effectively (which is often an under-rated concept) by doing this. The next best thing is to be the second in command on a high visibility project so you can learn the leadership ropes without being in the spotlight."

"Never say never. You can do it. There are millions of women supporting you and cheering for you. Keep things in perspective. Balance in life is important."

"Be flexible, do not become stagnant (be mobile)."

"Don't ask for favors because you are a woman."

"Continue to work on self-development and never limit your own potential."

"Treat everyone with respect. Expect the best from your employees and push them to stretch their abilities."

"The sky is the limit...listen to your people, respect them, and understand that they make you successful. Treat them right."

"Don't underestimate yourself. Grab opportunities to excel when they arise, even if you are afraid you will fail. If you never fail, you have not reached far enough. Your culture has endowed you with characteristics and gifts that your male peers don't generally possess, such as teaming, care for people, perception of emotional states in others. Use that grit and perception to help you compete in the situations where you may lack physical strength of the "good old boy" club membership. Be unique."

"Stop thinking of yourself as a woman manager and just think like a manager. Being good at that job has nothing to do with biology. The woman manager mindset is a self-fulfilling prophecy and means you will always be separate from the mainstream. Women are not from Venus and men are not from Mars. We are all from Earth and we need to get over it."

"We are all leaders, no matter what job we have, but need to realize that whatever we do, as women, will be noticed and criticized much more than what a man does. So we need to be extra careful about our comments and actions. Anyone new in management should take the initiative to get to know themselves as well as possible through thinking about it, observing their interactions with people, etc. They could take Meyers-Briggs or some other test and find out how task vs. relationship oriented they are, how comfortable they feel with lack of structure etc., so that they can recognize their own strengths and shortcomings and be flexible in dealing with subordinates differing capabilities. I would ask a woman new in management what goals she had for the future, and if it was to be a higher-level leader I would steer her into some of the management workload that would lend her a bigger picture outlook. Otherwise, just hang in there and give yourself time to become seasoned and mature."

"Expect to achieve high leadership positions and shape yourself to succeed in them, but be prepared to find satisfaction in middle-level management serving men with less ability than you have."

"I think women make exceptional managers. They frequently have excellent interpersonal skills and are concerned about people. They listen to others opinions and incorporate them into their plans. I would recommend that women interested in becoming leaders hone these characteristics."

"Leadership skills are different than managerial skills. They depend on influencing people – a positive thing. But influence can be close to manipulation – a negative thing. Leadership means getting things done through people, not doing them yourself. It is a new skill you need to work on separately from your managerial skills. And people need to trust you if you are to be effective, so be conscious of the long term effects of your actions as well as the short term results you're trying for."

"They can go as high in management as they aspire."

"Don't lose your compassion, treat others as you want to be treated. Keep humor in your work. Take risks."

"Find mentors to assist you in becoming a good leader. With every new job there is a learning curve and lessons learned. If someone has already gone down that road, why reinvent?"

"I believe the potential is there for more and more women to be placed in senior leadership positions. If that is what you want to do, do not hesitate to go after it. Be realistic in setting your goals, as not everyone can be an SES. Go to all the management courses you can get and do it as early in your career as the system will allow you to do. Find or mentor or several...people you respect and can communicate with openly. Do not limit your mentors to just the Federal workforce. Seek new challenges and don't get stagnant or complacent in any one organization. Risks are scary but necessary if you are committed to getting into a leadership role."

"Take on leadership roles even if your not a team leader or supervisor. Prepare for that next leadership role. Listen and learn from other supervisors – both good and bad."

"Potential is good – far better than it has ever been before."

"Seek out and take responsibility...there are many future opportunities for advancement given our workforce age."

"When one acquires a management position, I would assume a high percentage of strategies would have been accomplished. However, if they have not been accomplished, get them accomplished. In a management role, while you need to accomplish the strategies, move focus to becoming an effective manager-don't be a technician promoted to a management position. Work to become an effective and valued asset to your organization-don't be a hindrance."

"Ask for and accept new challenges. Take classes to develop yourself in your chosen career field. Keep your sense of humor, you are going to need it."

"You do have a future potential as a leader. It may take a bit yet, but opportunities are opening up more and more for women in upper management. If you want to get to the upper levels fast, however, you may have to actively look around for positions in other organizations/services to get there. If you are willing to bide your time a bit, your organization will probably eventually come around."

"Stay focused and don't let them get you down."

"Speak up, otherwise we will continue to do business as usual. We still have a lot of the old mentalities within the current leadership. If we do not speak up, nothing will change. We need to mold change now with our future leaders."

"Keep pushing to move ahead...don't get too comfortable and always believe in yourself. I would encourage women leaders to mentor other women and all deserving employees...help others along the way and you'll have help when you need it."

8. Do you think there are factors that influence women's success in the Government that are different than those that influence men's success in the Government?

Twenty-three respondents stated yes, there are factors. Seven stated no. The major factors discussed were that the Government was a firm believer in affirmative action and provides special opportunities for women, and that there are still societal bias and perceptions on women in leadership roles. Individual responses are as follow:

"The general societal factors that influence women's success in the business world are just as prevalent in Government. We still have a long way to go..."

"1. The Government could not discriminate against women as much as the private sector could, which enabled women to be more prevalent in Government service, even when they were relegated to the lowest job levels. This established a toehold for women in the Government

workforce. 2. Style. Women, to me, have a more collaborative style than men do, and I think this influences women's success a great deal. Many of the men who I consider the most successful have learned this skill."

"Many men in the Government (at least in the Army) have had some military experience, which gives them a better perspective of supporting other soldiers/customers and of Army equipment. Very few women have this background. There are also a higher percentage of male graduates of intern programs and a higher percentage of men have college degrees. Unfortunately, the child-bearing/child-rearing thing also enters in as it puts women at a disadvantage over their male counterparts.."

"Long history of men as Government leaders, male characteristics define what a successful leader "looks like", strong and well-established male networks, strong and well-established role of male military and business leaders."

"Yes, I still feel a woman must prove herself more than a man – knowledge, ability, influence etc. They must also prove that they have achieved the family/job/life balance – the perception of many is that women can't balance these satisfactorily."

"Women need to come off as being competent and confident (and not too feminine), but they have to be careful not to be too aggressive, and be perceived as "bitchy". This is a problem peculiar to women."

"...It's my opinion that a woman must be much more conscious than a man of the appearance of her relationships in order to protect the perception of competence that is important to achieving success. Whether you got where you are by ability or by "sleeping your way to the top" is still an issue for women. It generally is not for men."

"...maybe I'm Pollyanna, but I still believe success is more than an individual matter than a gender related one. We all have our different sets of problems to solve. It's the solving that makes or breaks us, not the problems ourselves."

"I think that stereotypical assumptions and prejudices factor into women's careers to a greater extent than men's careers, e.g., women are secondary income earners, that they always put personal situations in higher priority over professional, they are non-technical, they sleep their way to the top."

E. DEMOGRAPHICS

This section discusses the demographic data of the questionnaire respondents.

1. Age

Four of the respondents were from 30-39 years of age, sixteen were from 40-49 years of age, and ten were over fifty years old.

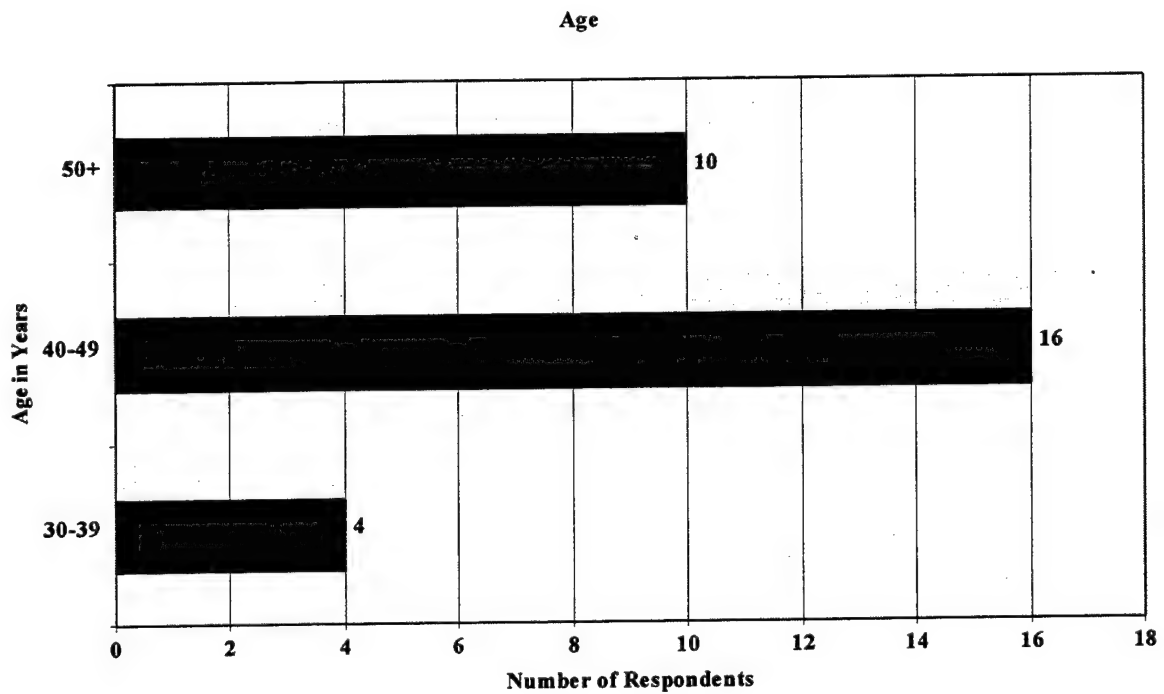


Figure 3. Age of Respondents (Source: Researcher)

2. Marital Status

Twenty-three of the respondents are married, seven are single.

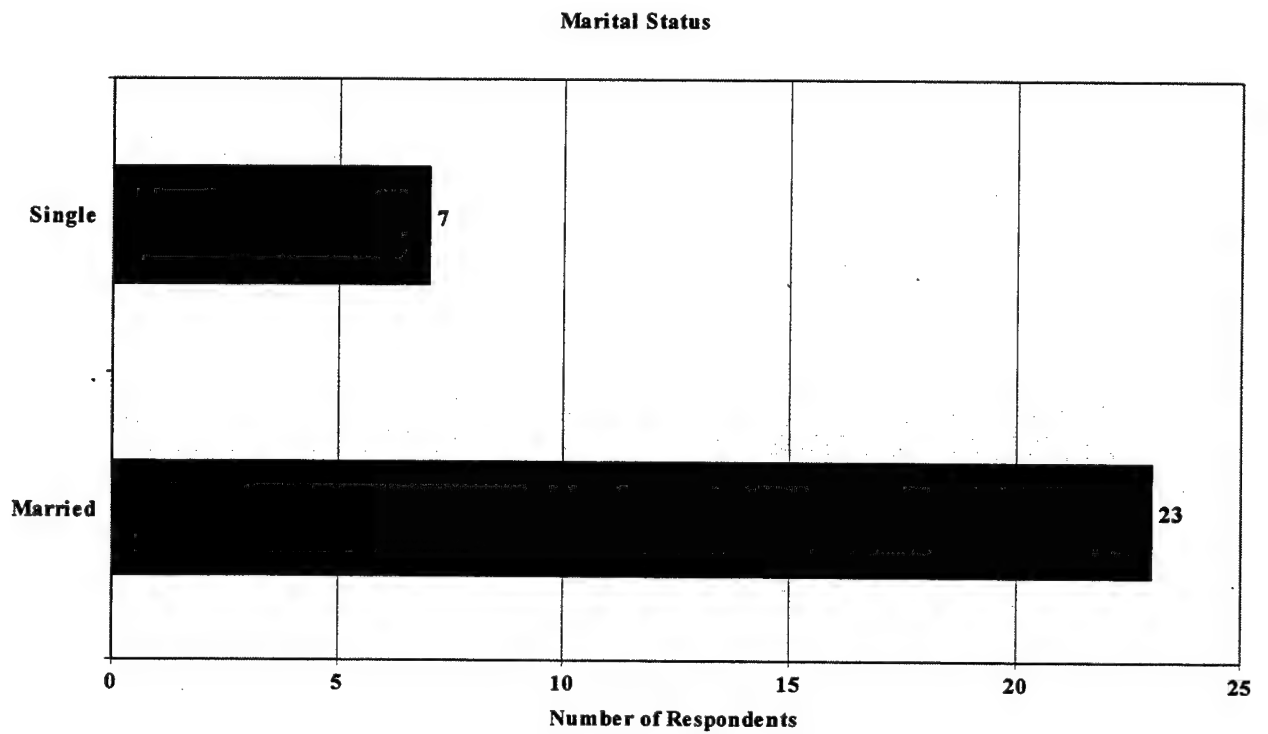


Figure 4. Marital Status of Respondents (Source: Researcher)

3. Number of Children

Nine of the respondents do not have children, five have one child, fourteen have two children, and two have three children.

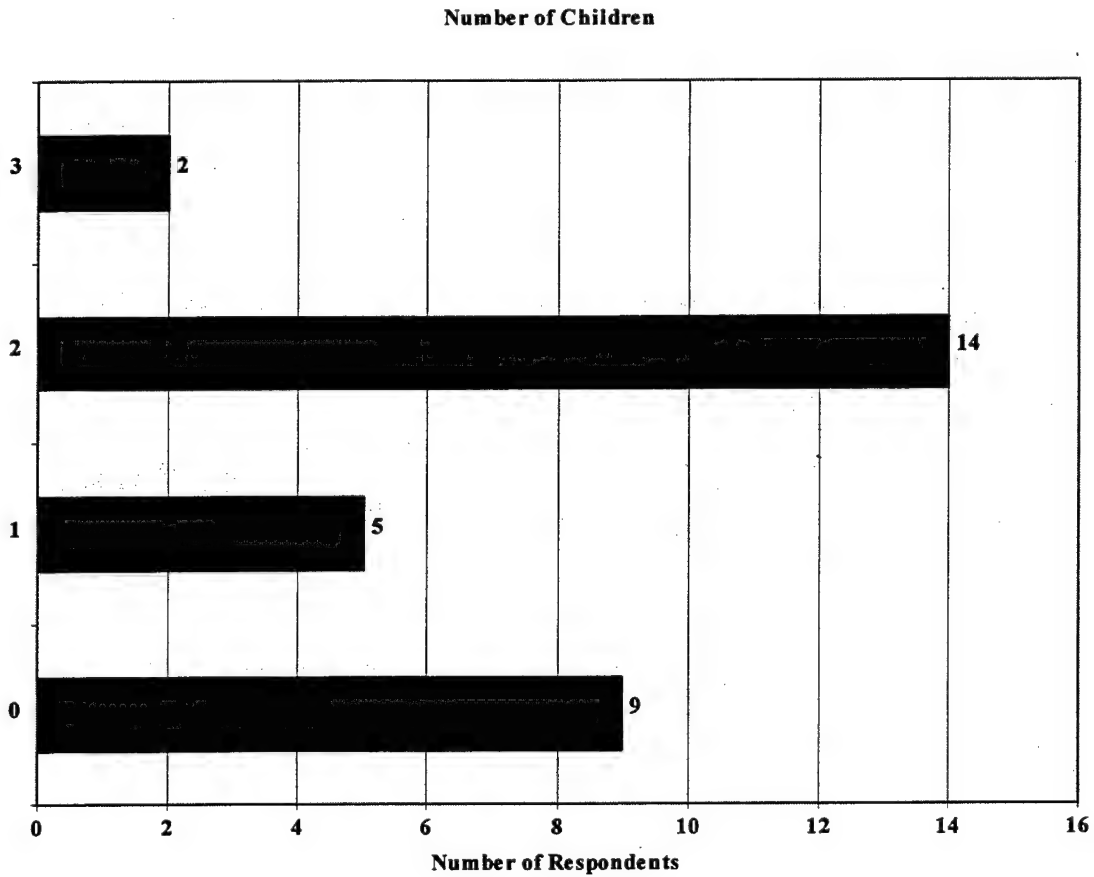


Figure 5. Number of Children (Source: Researcher)

4. Educational Level

Four of the respondents have some college, five have bachelor's degrees, five have post-bachelor education, fourteen have master's degrees, and two have doctorate degrees.

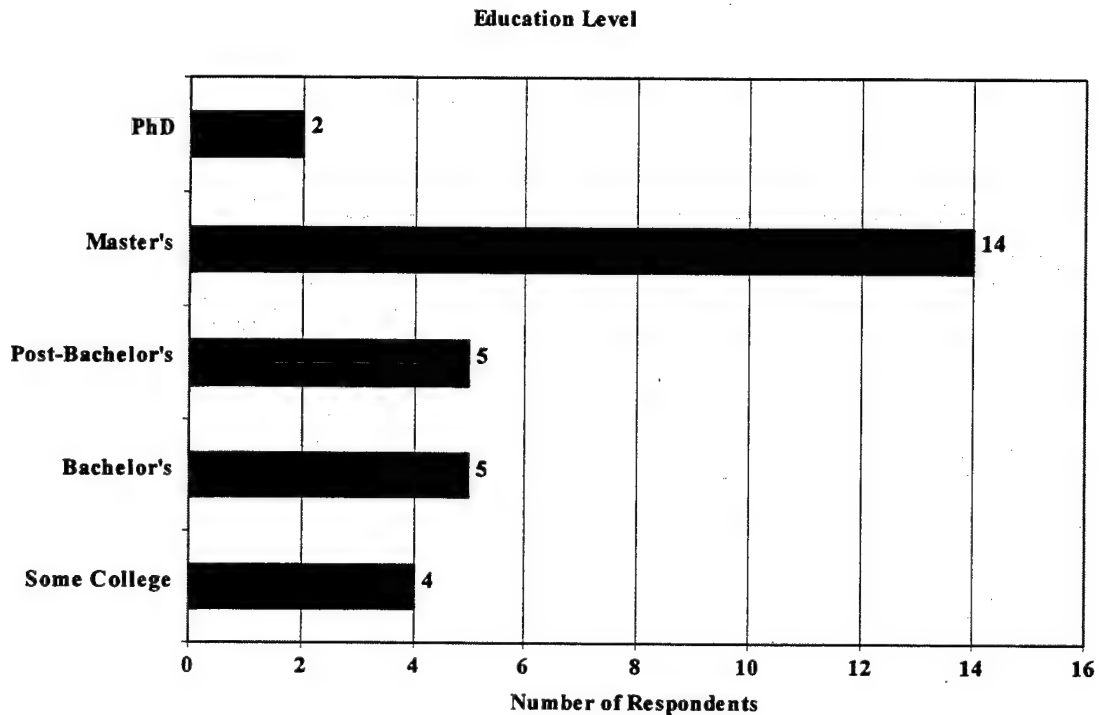


Figure 6. Educational Level (Source: Researcher)

F. ENVIRONMENTAL AND FAMILY INFLUENCES

This section discusses environmental and family influences and attempts to discover if early influences played a role in leadership development. The questions are as follows:

1. Did your parents set high educational standards?

Nineteen of the respondents stated yes, eleven stated no. Individual responses

follow:

“My father did not get the opportunity to go to college and wanted his children to fulfill that dream.”

“I was one of five children and performance in school was expected – all five of us were honor students.”

“A’s were expected.”

“My father’s most remembered comments whenever we received anything less than an A (including A-) was “Looks like there is room for improvement.”

2. Did your parents expect you to have a career?

Thirteen of the respondents said yes, seventeen said no. Individual responses

follow:

“Yes, but in some traditionally pink-collar type career, such as teaching.”

“Yes, I was encouraged to become a parochial school teacher.”

“Yes and it was a very unpopular view in my family in the late 60’s. My aunts could not understand why I would need a college degree if I was just going to get married and have children.”

“No, it was left up to our discretion with no pressure.”

“They would have been satisfied if I married and stayed at home.”

“Not clear if my mother expected me to have a career but I always expected to have a career.”

3. Did you as a child invest considerable time in study?

Sixteen of the respondents said yes, one said no, and thirteen said an average amount of time. For the most part, the respondents stated that they studied as hard as they had to get good grades and make sure their homework got done. Most had other activities to do as well.

4. What key words would you utilize to describe yourself while growing up, e.g. smart, hard-working, quiet etc.?

Obviously the responses were quite varied but the major key words were smart, hard-working, good student, quiet, and shy.

5. Did you attend public or parochial school while growing up?

Seventeen of the respondents stated public school, seven stated parochial school, and six stated a combination of both.

6. What were your favorite subjects in school?

The majority of the respondents stated English, followed in descending order by math, foreign languages, science, and social studies.

7. Were you involved in extracurricular activities and if so, what kind?

All respondents stated that yes; they were involved in extracurricular activities. The major activities listed are school newspaper, choir, band, student government, yearbook, honor society, theater, cheerleading, singing, piano, speech, debate, drill team, dance, tumbling, volleyball, swimming, tennis, and basketball.

8. Were you competitive in school?

Twenty-two of the respondents stated yes, or yes very. Eight stated no.

Individual responses follow:

"I was very competitive. I graduated first in my class in High School and won Phi Beta Kappa Key at MI State and graduated with honors. Unfortunately they did not have women's organized sports when I was in High School – but I think I would have enjoyed and would have been very intense and competitive at that as well."

"VERY competitive."

"Yes, although it was a conflict for me at the time. Who wants to date the girl that just beat you on the Physics test? I remember considering trying to get a few wrong – enough to still get an A, but so that one of the guys would get the best grade."

"Yes, I had a personal need to get A's. More in competition with myself than anyone else."

9. Did you have the opportunity to travel with your family frequently?

Eleven of the respondents stated yes, the majority of nineteen stated no.

10. Did you have the opportunity to travel independently?

Seventeen of the respondents stated yes, thirteen of the respondents stated no

11. What is your birth order in the family?

Thirteen of the respondents are first born (two are only children), ten are in the middle, and seven are the youngest.

The next chapter will discuss the results and conclusions of the survey questionnaire and answer the primary and secondary research questions. It will conclude with recommendations for further study.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A. INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the results of the data collected from an interview questionnaire given to thirty civilian women in GS 14 and 15 positions working for the Army. The questionnaire was designed to elicit responses concerning strategies and personal characteristics relating to success. The results of the questionnaire are used to answer the primary and secondary research questions outlined in Chapter 1.

B. ANSWERS TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The primary research question states: What leadership strategies and personal characteristics are considered critical in enabling women to reach the upper levels of their organization? Initially analyzing the results to the secondary research questions and then comparing the results to the literature review can answer this question. The secondary research question results are summarized as follows:

1. Do successful civilian women leaders in the Army believe a "glass ceiling" still exists and what are their viewpoints on the topic?

The majority of the respondents (87%) believe that yes, a glass ceiling or invisible barrier to career success still exists. The respondents state that the ceiling has been changing over time as more women are entering the workforce, but still remains due to male and societal perceptions that women are not natural leaders, or should concentrate more on family and children concerns. Many also mentioned the good old boys network that is slow in accepting women's abilities and talents and the network tends to promote

other men like themselves. The women leaders in this survey sample have been promoted to high-grade positions in spite of their perception that a glass ceiling still exists however, and this was accomplished by utilizing strategies and personal characteristics to succeed.

The respondents were asked if they believed that many women avoid prestigious jobs because of the long hours and stress that might occur. The consensus on this question was that both men and women have to make a choice at certain points in their career to put family commitments first over promotion or career opportunities – especially with small children at home. The main point made here is that career success is a choice dependent on other concerns and a glass ceiling only exists if women are denied opportunities despite the will to achieve.

2. What major leadership strategies have influenced the success of civilian women leaders in the Army?

Based on the results of the questionnaire/interview survey, the following are a summary of strategies that were most mentioned by the respondents.

Learning Opportunities

By far the most important strategy mentioned by the survey population was the importance of learning by taking advantage of every formal or informal training opportunity that is offered. The respondents mentioned over and over the importance of a formal education as well as leadership and acquisition related courses that highlight how the Army works – strategically, operationally, tactically, and politically. Included in this category is that of diversification and being adaptive to change. The respondents

stated how important it was not to remain in the same organization or job too long. It was important to seek opportunities in other offices and special assignments. One respondent wraps it up by stating, "...Get involved in assignments that provide growth and challenge, don't rest on prior accomplishments – always set out to prove yourself over and over..." Diversification also helps create visibility and aids in developing interpersonal skills.

Extra Hours

All thirty respondents stated that they worked extra hours when required and/or necessary in order to portray dedication.

Networking

Networking was utilized by 77% of the respondents, but thought to be an essential strategy for career progression by 87% of the respondents. The respondents stated that networking enabled them to learn about other opportunities that were available as well as the politics of the organization and who the main players were. Networking also helped the respondents increase their visibility and chance to be heard by senior management. Although networking did have some negative aspects, as pointed out by some of the respondents (can become pushy and artificial) the general consensus is that it is important to get your name and face known in the organization.

Mentoring/Alliances

This strategy was utilized by 73% of the respondents and played an important role in career success. Mentors or alliances facilitated the process of leader development by

providing career advice, guidance and influence. Mentors also provided individual respondents with the encouragement to succeed and exposed them to different experiences, people, organization, and assignments. The mentors utilized were both formally assigned as well as informal networks of colleagues.

Strategic Plan

Although only 57% of the survey respondents actually planned career action at the beginning of middle of their careers, the respondents stated that they did look for and take advantage of strategic opportunities to advance when they occurred. Therefore, utilizing a strategic plan or taking advantage of strategic opportunities was a personal strategy for success.

The major strategies utilized by the women interviewed for this study do map with the strategies discussed in the literature. The most important are having an influential mentor, working hard and consistently exceeding expectations, diversifying and seeking out new opportunities and difficult assignments. A recent Catalyst study collaborated these findings by stating that women in corporate leadership succeeded by consistently exceeding expectations (77%), developing a management which males are comfortable with (61%), seeking out difficult assignments (50%), and having an influential mentor (37%) (Cited from website <http://www.catalystwomen.org>).

3. What major personal characteristics do civilian women leaders in the Army believe are critical to their success and why?

The top five personal characteristics that civilian women leaders believe are critical to their success based on the survey results are interpersonal skills, adaptability,

intelligence, commitment, and self-confidence. These personal characteristics tie in with the major success strategies previously discussed. In order to diversify and become knowledgeable in all aspects of an organization, the ability to adapt is essential. Interpersonal skills are necessary for effective communication and intelligence is necessary to be perceived as a leader.

Also mentioned repeatedly in the open-ended questions were the importance of hard work and perseverance. It is important to "give every effort your best" as stated by one of the respondents. And the perception of ability is just as, or more important than actual ability, as mentioned by twenty-nine of the respondents. Perception has a direct effect on how people perceive a woman's abilities and can be a major influence on whether or not good assignments and new opportunities are given. One respondent states, "Perception is reality. People let go of perceptions only grudgingly. If one markets oneself well initially, one then generally has bought lots of time to actually gain the marketed level of expertise." Obviously, both the perception and the reality of ability are essential to success. And perceived perception can change over time, by continually demonstrating a high level of competence.

A positive attitude is also crucial for success, as stated by all thirty respondents. Nobody wants to work with a person who has a bad attitude about his or her job. One respondent who says, "I believe attitude is paramount to success, sums up this concept. I can't imagine promoting someone who has a negative attitude."

Twenty-three respondents stated that they always have felt a sense of accomplishment concerning their careers. This sense of accomplishment has given them the motivation and dedication to strive for further success.

The primary motivation for success, based on the survey results, is an internal drive to succeed rather than an external life-changing event such as a divorce or death. Also important to success is job fit, or the importance of finding a job that you like and feel comfortable with. Once finding a job you like however, it also is important to strive for new challenges and opportunities.

The major personal characteristics appearing in the literature do match the questionnaire/survey results. The most important are to work hard and be persistent in achieving goals, acting with integrity, portraying confidence in yourself and your abilities, and developing communication and interpersonal skills.

4. What environmental or demographic factors have influenced the success of civilian women leaders in the Army?

The demographic data are diverse. It appears, by examining the survey results, that age, marital status, number of children, birth order, travel opportunities, type of school educated in, or the type and degree of extracurricular activities do not have a direct association with success. A more direct association with success is the fact that all of the respondents have at least some college; with over 50% the recipients having graduate degrees. Nineteen of the respondents also stated that their parents set high educational standards, and they were expected to study and do well in school although the majority of the respondents were not expected to have a "career". In summary, parental expectations to do well in school and complete college and beyond does correlate with success. This literature corroborates this finding by emphasizing the importance of setting high educational expectations.

In choosing words to describe themselves as they were growing up, the women in the study consistently chose “smart”, “hard worker”, “good student”, “quiet” and “shy”. The literature states that, although there were various descriptors used by women in some careers, “smart” and “hard worker” were constants for all careers. It is important for successful women to view themselves with these attributes.

5. What specific advice can we give women in management to enable them to achieve the success they desire?

The advice given by the survey respondents was consistent with the literature and can be summarized as follows:

- Do your best at what you do, become an expert.
- Take care of yourself professionally, physically, and spiritually.
- Take advantage of every learning and greening opportunity that you can; the Army has a lot to offer. Seek out and accept new challenges. Get the best education you can.
- Have a great attitude.
- Develop patience and perseverance.
- Learn about the political environment where you work and the military mindset
- Be mentored and be a mentor to other women.
- Develop high expectations to achieve for yourself and others.

C. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there are a number of specific strategies and personal characteristics that are extremely critical in helping women achieve the success they desire in their careers. The factors that are most critical to achieving success are taking advantage of educational and learning opportunities, hard work and effort, learning how to interact with people effectively, perseverance, and an attitude to succeed. In contrast, the factors that were most relevant to holding women back include both external and internal factors. The external factors include preconceived notions about the roles of men and women, and perception by men and society in general that women do not make good leaders because they are less competent and more emotional than men. These preconceptions have been changing over the years however, and as women continue to achieve advancement, the reality of women as successful leaders will change these preconceived perceptions. The internal factors holding women back include their own beliefs and attitudes are concerning their own capabilities. Any woman can achieve success by developing the applicable attitude, skills, knowledge, and abilities. A vision to succeed is imperative. And, according to the majority of questionnaire respondents, it might be easier to succeed working for the Army as opposed to private industry, due to the affirmative action initiatives that provide special opportunities for women.

The leadership advice given by the women respondents is very close to the advice given in the literature. The major difference is the recommendation to understand the military environment in all of its aspects when working for the Army. The main point of both the literature and the questionnaire advice is that a woman cannot expect to succeed just because she is a woman, but must take the time and effort required to develop and

implement the personal characteristics and strategies discussed. Women may have to change or modify their personality to get ahead, and what works for some women may not work for all.

The importance of this thesis is to outline the leadership strategies and personal characteristics that have worked for many women at the top of their respective organizations. It has been proven that these leadership strategies and personal characteristics work – so it is important to train and educate the younger generations. As more and more women enter the workforce and persevere to get ahead the gap between men and women in high-grade leadership positions will lessen. More women at the top will be able to mentor younger women who have just entered the management profession. More women at the top will also be able to create their own network or alliance of relationships in order to further influence the careers of younger women. As more women become aware of the strategies and personal characteristics necessary to achieve success, the windows in the glass ceiling will continue to enlarge until the glass ceiling is a concept of the past.

D. RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

Recommendations for further study include:

- Giving the same questionnaire to male civilians working for the Army in high-grade positions to see if the results fit with the results of this study.
- Increasing the sample by distributing the questionnaire to women in high-graded positions in other Army and Department of Defense agencies.

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APPENDIX A. WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

Interview Questions:

The purpose of this interview is to determine if there are specific achievement strategies or personal characteristics that you believe helped you achieve success as a female civilian working for the Army. The questionnaire is divided into several parts depending on the type of questions asked. Your cooperation in completing this questionnaire is very much appreciated. Your responses are voluntary and your identity will be kept confidential

Part A: Demographic Profile

Name (Optional):

Position (Title):

Grade:

Years in Current Position:

Age – Choose One:

- ☐ Age 30-39
- ☐ Age 40-49
- ☐ Age 50 and above

Marital Status:

Number of Children:

Educational Level:

Part B: Environmental and Family Influences

1. Did your parents set high educational standards?
2. Did your parents expect you to have a career?
3. Did you as a child invest considerable time in study?
4. What key words would you utilize to describe yourself while growing up, e.g. smart, hard working, quiet etc?
5. Did you attend public or parochial school while growing up?
6. What were your favorite subjects in school?

7. Were you involved in extracurricular activities and if so, what kind?
8. Were you competitive in school?
9. Did you have the opportunity to travel with your family frequently?
10. Did you have the opportunity to travel independently?
11. What is your birth order in the family?

Part C: Critical Achievement Strategies and Personal Characteristics

1. Please choose the top five personal characteristics you feel have contributed to your success. Add your own if this list is missing the characteristics you feel have been most important.
 - a. Humor
 - b. Self-confidence
 - c. Ambition
 - d. Adaptability
 - e. Creativity
 - f. Physical Appearance
 - g. Independence
 - h. Risk-taking
 - i. Interpersonal Skills
 - j. Self-discipline
 - k. Perseverance
 - l. Assertiveness
 - m. Intelligence
 - n. Compassion
 - o. Commitment
 - p. Initiative
 - q. Sociability
2. When in your career did you develop a strategic plan for achieving success?
3. Do you work extra hours at your job?
4. Did you have the help of a mentor or mentors?
5. Do you love your job?
6. Do you feel that loving your job is a significant factor in achieving success?
7. Do you have the help of a good support system?

8. How important do you think your attitude is in terms of achieving success?
9. Do you network?
10. Do you think networking is an important strategy conducive to achieving success?
11. Was there a critical life event (e.g. death of a close family member or divorce) that occurred that helped propel you to achieve success?
12. How important do you feel the perception of your ability is as contrasted to your actual working ability?
13. Did you always have a sense of achievement concerning your career?

Part D: Your perceptions of women in leadership (general questions)

1. Do you think a "glass-ceiling" still exists?
2. What are your views on the "glass-ceiling" concept?
3. What is your opinion on the following statement...."Many women avoid prestigious jobs because of the long hours and stress that might occur."
4. What factors do you think are most relevant to achieving success in general?
5. What factors do you think are most relevant to holding women back?
6. What critical piece of advice would you give a women new in management working as a civilian for the Army?
7. What career strategies do you feel are particularly crucial to advancing in your specific career field?
8. What advice would you give women new in management concerning their future potential as leaders?
9. Do you think there are factors that influence women's success in the Government that are different than those that influence men's success in the Government? If yes, what are these factors?

Thank you very much for completing this interview. Your cooperation is very much appreciated!

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